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# CHURCHES OF DISTINCTION IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

*The Committee on Social and Religious Surveys, which is responsible for this publication, was organized in January, 1921. The Committee conducts and publishes studies and surveys and promotes conferences for their consideration. Its aim is to combine the scientific method with the religious motive. It coöperates with other social and religious agencies, but is itself an independent organization.*

*The Committee is composed of: John R. Mott, Chairman; Ernest D. Burton, Secretary; Raymond B. Fosdick, Treasurer; James L. Barton and W. H. P. Faunce. Galen M. Fisher is Executive Secretary. The offices are at 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.*

# CHURCHES *of* DISTINCTION IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

EDITED BY

EDMUND DES. BRUNNER

*With a Foreword by*

EDWARD ALSWORTH ROSS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
AND MAPS

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CHURCHES OF DISTINCTION IN TOWN AND COUNTRY. II

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# FOREWORD

By Edward Alsworth Ross

PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Some day there will be sociologists from China, India, Iraq, Egypt, visiting us—men with a Confucian, Buddhist, or Mohammedan background. How will they react to what this book describes? What will they think of rural communities knit together by religious ideas and organization? I fancy the sight will warm their hearts as it warms mine. For your true sociologist is enchanted to see men and women coöperating in the pursuit of the higher interests. These chapters picture for us real communities, tasting some of the sweetest of human experiences—fellowship, social sympathy, harmony, teamwork on behalf of the finer aims of life. It is plain that the country churches here described are fulfilling an ennobling and socializing mission. Where they function the farmers will never become animalized peasants like those repulsive creatures Zola describes in "La Terre." How many youthful aspirations would wither but for them! How many rare and noble spirits on the farms these churches reach are cheered and made glad by fellowship in the quest of the noblest ideals that have been set before men?

Consider the rubbish the ordinary newspaper spreads before its readers. Mark the trash displayed on the stand in the station waiting-room. When I note what the people on the trains read, I wonder whether the warfare on illiteracy is worth while. But when I contemplate these live, vigorous Christian churches promoting acquaintance with the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles—the best that has ever been said or written—I cheer up. After view-

ing the sporting page, the comics, and the pictorial magazines, I am grateful for the pulpit and the Sunday school, particularly in the open country where, owing to cultural barrenness, it is easy to lose sight of the things of the spirit; and I think the sociologist from Sian Fu or Bagdad would feel the same.

These stories show the technique of serving the community by means of a church. They make clear just what may be done to stimulate the higher interests—intellectual, social, religious—in the countryside. There must be thousands of struggling rural churches which, from these pages, may learn how properly to fulfill their task.

# PREFACE

During 1922 the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys undertook to make a first-hand investigation of the forty most successful town and country churches which could be found anywhere in the United States. The methods of work employed by these churches and the basis adopted by the Committee in selecting the forty from the hundreds of prominent churches in the country are treated in a companion volume, "Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches." The present volume contains the stories of fourteen of the forty, chosen, not necessarily because they were in all respects the best, but because each of them illustrates some particular condition or problem and its successful solution. They are published in the hope that they may be of assistance to leaders who are facing similar problems.

Although these fourteen stories deal with churches of various sizes and denominations and situated in various circumstances, they show that success comes by the discerning application of a few basic principles which take shape in differing methods for each situation. It is hardly likely that any reader will be tempted to apply slavishly the methods described. Any such attempt would probably be unfortunate. He will be able, however, to seize upon the underlying principles involved and regard the methods as suggestions which may be adapted freely to his own needs.

Each of the stories is the result of a careful investigation by an employed field worker over a period of from eight days to a month. The final chapter, dealing with Middle Octoraro, is more elaborated than the rest in order to indicate something of the type and scope of the investigation conducted in each place. In addition to its own staff, the Committee was fortunate in being able to avail itself of the

services of certain individuals loaned to it by the courtesy of other organizations. Rev. H. N. Morse, of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, and Dr. U. L. Mackey, of the Presbyterian Synod of New York, are each responsible for one chapter, while fifteen churches, three of which are included in the present volume, were studied by Mr. John Myers and Mr. Ernest Brindle, of the Home Mission Board of the Reformed Church in America.

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CHURCHES OF DISTINCTION
IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

# CHURCHES OF DISTINCTION IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

## Chapter I

### MODERN METHODS ON A CIRCUIT

### CENTERTON, ARKANSAS

*The story of how modern methods of country church work were successfully applied to a circuit.*

It has been truly said: "There is nothing that counts so much in country life as good neighborship."

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Centerton, Arkansas, owes its very life to its Gospel of Neighborliness. Through it, town and country barriers have been broken down and better farms, homes, and schools have developed. By helping others, this church has outgrown its circuit and become a strong independent organization. Every one in its parish, every one in the parishes of the four neighborhood churches, calls it Friend; for it has not only given encouragement to religion but has aided in the solving of land problems, has trained new leaders, has enlisted the young people for service and pointed out to Centerton the main road to success.

A great revival meeting was held in a church of the Middle West some time ago at which Dr. Warren H. Wilson astounded a large congregation by turning the church pulpit over on its side and placing on it a cream separator. He followed this by a demonstration of what could be done with the separator; and some of the more conservative sisters and elders were quite overcome by the unconventional methods of the preacher. It happened, however, that this meeting resulted in one of the greatest religious revivals ever

held in that part of the country; for it brought the farmer and the farmer's church into closer relationship and made both aware that each could help the other, since, after all, their problem was a common one.

In much the same way the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Centerton, came into its own. Two years ago the people of this little Ozark plateau village of northwest Arkansas had the "blues." Their great apple crop, which had always been their main source of income, had failed. Bank resources had shrunk from $137,000 to $91,000. Farmers talked of the hard times and of harder times still to come. Town and country were separated by barriers of suspicion and misunderstanding.

In a normal year apples earn $800,000 for the community; and in the shipping season wagons wait their turn, in a line nearly a mile long, to unload at the depot. But in 1921 a frost destroyed nearly all the fruit, and Centerton, having no other crop to fall back on, naturally got the "blues."

Church life was at low ebb. The building of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, stood neglected, poorly equipped and in poor repair. It was indifferently sustained and indifferently attended. Program there was none; and in fact there never *had* been one. Church funds were handled in a hit-or-miss fashion. The pastor had never received more than $1,000 salary from the entire circuit, which at that time included Centerton and three open country churches at New Home, Osage Mills, and Droke. Mount Hebron church has since been added to the circuit. At Centerton, the Baptist and Christian churches were weak and without regular pastors. Services were held irregularly and denominational feeling ran high.

No young people's work was in progress, and no groups were organized either for service or sociability, at the Methodist church. The church Board of Stewards was inactive and without a head. Leadership was entirely lacking. And the open country churches in the circuit were all in the same state of inactivity. Their memberships were small and scattered and their services poorly attended.

### CURING THE "BLUES"

Just at this time the Reverend W. J. Le Roy was sent to the Centerton Circuit to build up a "demonstration parish." To this optimistic, friendly pastor it was clear at once that before he could hope to rebuild the church organization he must cure Centerton's "blues." It was not long before he had become a friend of farmer and business man, of boys and girls, of every one in his parish. Centerton is an all-American village of 350 inhabitants, with a surrounding country population of about 850. Conservative folk of fine southern stock, villagers and farmers alike, saw that the pastor was ready to do all in his power to help solve their problems; and, therefore, they gave him their support wholeheartedly.

Believing that "if God's house was to prosper, the soil must be kept fertile, the flocks and herds built up and the farm home made contented and happy," he made an intensive survey of the parish to learn actual existing conditions. The results surprised even the farmers themselves. He found that farms averaged in size about eighty acres and that land was valued at $125 an acre; that the average wealth per farm was $7,000; that only 2 per cent. of the 220 farms within a six-mile radius were operated by tenants; that there was more wealth among these people than among his former parishioners in even larger centers. About the countryside he found prize stock, up-to-date equipment, tractors, many automobiles and comfortable farm homes. The pastor carried this information from farm to farm and soon people began to think that perhaps they were not so poor after all. Little by little they began to regain confidence in themselves and in their fellow men.

### REACHING OUT TO THE FARMS

Through the influence of the County Farm Bureau, interest in diversified farming was growing rapidly, and Mr. Le Roy worked with the County Agent in the conviction that "better farms make better folks." Together they

preached the value of raising cattle, hogs and poultry. They encouraged farmers to plant berries and vegetables; to raise apples for a profit crop, but to raise other crops to live on.

At Springdale a new plant was being erected by a grape juice company which promised to buy all the grapes the farmers in the district could raise. Mr. Le Roy urged the planting of vineyards.

Each community in the county chose a committee to look after grape interests; Mr. Le Roy is at the head of the Grape Committee for Centerton. When a meeting was held in 1922 at Tontitown to give farmers an opportunity to view the vineyards there, the pastor was present with the largest single delegation.

A new spirit of coöperation developed which resulted in the planting of acres of strawberries. This venture proved such a success that a Marketing Association for berries and beans was formed. By June, 1922, the organization had a membership of twenty-two and more than 117 acres of berries had been signed over for marketing.

Dairying has developed to such an extent that a coöperative shipping association has been formed. This came about partly through Mr. Le Roy's influence, for when plans for the organization were being laid, the men interested said to him: "Look here, we can't form anything if you don't come along." So the preacher jumped into the automobile and went with them all over the countryside encouraging the farmers to make the association possible by their cooperation.

It is the men Mr. Le Roy met in the fields and barnyards that now swell his congregations. They call him the "horticultural preacher." He and Mrs. Le Roy have visited in homes within a radius of from four to six miles, in homes where a Methodist preacher had not been for many years. This friendly man of God claims that a "visiting pastor has a church-going people"; and his present congregations seem to prove it true. He says, "Let the pastor associate himself with the daily life of his people and they will attend his services."

### CENTERING ACTIVITIES IN THE CHURCH

While Mr. Le Roy was helping the farmers with their land problems, he was laying foundations for a strong community church organization. He appealed to his people on this score: "Whatever you are denominationally, while you live in a community live up with whatever church is there. All are united in business and education. Unless we are united in religion we are like so many stragglers. Without coöperation in religion, there is no more hope for success than for a disorganized business project." First the church board was reorganized and meetings were held monthly, after which the plans for the church program were laid before the people for discussion and criticism. In this way the pastor made his parishioners feel that they counted and were actually necessary participants in the activities of their church.

Then he went out after leaders and when he found them he saw to it that they were given their church jobs. A weekly teacher-training class was introduced in order to develop efficient leadership among the young people.

Centerton's play life was almost an unknown quantity until two years ago. Boys and girls were not organized to do anything—but Mr. Le Roy was determined to make his church the center of Centerton and he and Mrs. Le Roy set out to organize every age-group and sex-group for service not only in the church but in the community.

First an athletic club was formed. Mr. Le Roy said, while the club was being organized, that he had to trust in the Lord to find some one to direct the work. A leader was found in the person of an ex-army man who freely offered his services during spare time. At first a small store was used for meetings. It accommodated only about twenty boys. The membership increased so rapidly that the club soon outgrew the building and began having drills in Main Street. But the street was not a satisfactory place, so the boys went to an apple-packing station generously placed at their disposal by a prominent citizen. Apparatus,

including boxing rings, a wrestling mat, punching bags, trapeze and horizontal bars, were purchased; games, calisthenics, running matches became popular; and once a month a community social was held. To this affair came even the older people from miles around. One of the oldest members of the church said one day, as she watched her grandson wrestling on the church lawn: "I don't know as I like to see a relative of mine mixed up in this sort of thing; but I suppose it's all right after all." And that is the way all Centerton came to feel about it. It was all right if Mr. Le Roy said so. The athletic club membership is now seventy-five and a real force in community life.

Young married women and girls organized a group known as the Pollyannas. This club has interested itself in civic improvement and coöperates with the athletic club in keeping the village in a sanitary condition. The Pollyannas have done much toward the beautification of Centerton and have encouraged their neighbors to plant more flowers. They met one day with the Mayor and Council with a petition to have a dilapidated building near the depot torn down and suggested to the authorities of the Frisco Railroad that a packing house be erected in its place for the shipping of berries and fruit in season. They plan to lay out a little park on a triangle near the station which has long been an eyesore, an ungraded plot of ground overgrown with weeds. With the center of the village thus transformed, other improvements are sure to follow. The Pollyannas have also furnished funds for volley-ball, tennis, and croquet equipment for the church playground. They meet once a month with the home demonstration agent who comes from Bentonville to teach them sewing. This is a real church community club and Mrs. Le Roy says "it is the prize."

Then there are the Hustlers, an organization of girls whose program consists of socials and athletics. When the athletic club is not using the hall, the girls go down there in bloomers and middies, go through their drills and do stunts to their hearts' content. They are learning to stand and breathe properly.

Twenty-eight Scouts found an ideal leader in their pastor, who teaches them scoutcraft and laws of health; and who camps and fishes with them every year over at Osage Mills by the creek.

The Ladies' Aid furnishes one good reason why an old resident remarked: "We live at home and board at the same place." The ladies make doughnuts and dollars. "They do things and they don't gossip," is a saying in Centerton.

The Epworth League is well organized, and in addition to its religious program holds monthly socials. Sometimes the members drive out four or five miles into the country for meetings.

### THE MAGIC OF NEIGHBORLINESS

In this way barriers are broken down and people forget whether they belong to town or country. Country homes are ever at their service for lawn parties, ice cream socials and good times in general.

One of the greatest influences for tying together town and country interests was the organization, by the pastor's wife, of a Community Mission Society. It is made up of all women interested in the entire parish of the five churches. Monthly meetings are held in the individual neighborhoods and union quarterly meetings are held at the time of the Conference.

A neighborly spirit is the keynote of Mr. Le Roy's services both in Centerton, the base of the operations, and out in the open country. For a time he alone ministered to the entire circuit; but this past year activities at Centerton have made it necessary for an assistant pastor, residing in one of the open country church neighborhoods, to attend to the work of the outlying districts. This enables Mr. Le Roy to preach at one open country church once a month, when he exchanges with the assistant, and each of the churches can hold at least two regular services a month.

From time to time the country congregations go over to Centerton to service, or the Centerton people attend one of the country churches. They get acquainted; and pro-

grams carried on in both village and country obtain new life from the exchange of ideas.

Having reorganized the churches, Mr. Le Roy determined to set them on a firm financial basis. A regular budget plan was introduced and the first annual every-member canvass will be held next year. The church supports the Sunday school at Centerton in the belief that "to make a Sunday school support itself is too much like treating it as a stepchild."

### MUSIC PLAYS A PART

Emphasis was placed upon the Sunday schools. Study groups were organized and suitable books were studied and reviewed. Then came into existence the famous orchestra that now has seventeen members and is in constant demand for miles around. The pastor is a lover of music, but when he suggested the organization of an orchestra many of the young people who responded could not read the notes for any instrument and had no choice as to what they would play.

That orchestra now has six violins, three cornets, a saxophone, which is played by the pastor's daughter; a clarinet, trombone, tuba, drum, piano and two 'cellos. The players are not only learning good music and getting enjoyment out of their musical education but are giving to Centerton and surrounding communities what is usually so badly lacking in the average rural parish. The leader, a professional musician of wide experience, gives each member two private lessons a month, for which each pays $1.00 monthly. Weekly rehearsals are as eagerly attended as any social club meetings could possibly be.

For several years a project to organize a singing society had failed. In 1921, under the leadership of a former evangelist-singer, new interest in singing began to grow, and to-day Centerton has a chorus of fifty voices. A girls' quartette and two or three men's quartettes are trained and are always in demand at community functions.

In April, 1922, after a successful year with a community

CENTERTON'S "FIGHT FANS" WATCH AN EXHIBITION BOUT BY BOYS OF THE ATHLETIC CLUB

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ORCHESTRA OF SEVENTEEN PIECES

program, a cyclone suddenly hit Centerton and destroyed the church building, leaving only the new $75 cement steps, a recent gift of the Ladies' Aid. It was only a little more than a month later that the leading citizens of the town completed the digging of the new basement for a new community church building. They even said regarding the storm: "It must have been Providence, for we've been needing a larger building for years." Each organization was eager to do its bit toward the new church. The Ladies' Aid chose to be responsible for the furnishing of the basement. Mr. Le Roy has made his members feel that they have a very real share in the plans. In the basement there are clubrooms, social hall and kitchen. The main auditorium, seating 225 people, is flanked by several separate Sunday school rooms. The grounds have been carefully laid out so that playgrounds and picnic space and driveways shall all have their places. While the new building has been under construction, services have been held in the high school building.

### COMMUNITY PROGRAM IDEA SPREADS

The community program has come to stay; and the country churches on the circuit have been encouraged by it to plan community programs of their own. Oakley Chapel at Droke is raising funds to build a new basement for social purposes. People of several denominations are working together in this Droke church. The teacher of the men's class is a Baptist. Close by is a new, modern school building, which, together with the church, forms a real progressive community center.

At Mount Hebron there is an unusually large number of young people. Twenty girls in one Sunday school class there are clamoring for club activities and the wife of the assistant pastor has gone to the rescue.

At Council Grove the people are ready to take hold of anything that makes for the good of the community and church. They attend services as a matter of course and it is not an unusual occurrence for the church to be crowded on a Sunday morning. The Sunday school is large, with

an attendance sometimes of seventy-five. Daily Bible reading is stressed in many homes in this neighborhood.

Throughout the circuit, if one church has a strawberry festival or other gathering, there will surely be found there folks from all the other four points.

The program of the community church covers every part of Centerton's life. The results of the past year show "a cleaner town, a better understanding among the people, more people doing church work, more family altars than ever in the history of the community, and, last but not least, thirty young men and young women who have given their lives to the Master." Two hundred and sixty-five people, 22 per cent. of Centerton's population, are members of this church; the total enrollment of the other two churches in the village being less than one-half this number. The total enrollment of the entire circuit is 551. Last year there were altogether fifty additions by confession of faith, while forty-seven became members by letter. Fifty-one adults and two infants were baptized.

The community church has become the central radiating force of Centerton. It has grown strong in giving help to others. It has, in fact, outgrown its circuit; and henceforth will be an independent organization with a full-time resident pastor. Perhaps Oakley Chapel or the church at Council Grove may become a nucleus for the building of a community program. Though Centerton has outgrown its circuit it has not outgrown its Gospel of Neighborliness! The friendship of town and country has been permanently established; and through it five churches in "the apple orchard of America" have become active, progressive, going organizations.

# Chapter II

## A CASE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

## THE KIRKPATRICK MEMORIAL CHURCH OF PARMA, IDAHO

*A conspicuous example of a denominational community church made strong, serviceable and self-supporting by the will of the community.*

The Kirkpatrick Memorial Community Church of Parma, Idaho, is a church of unusual beginnings. It was not formed by the coming together of a number of different organizations, nor by the efforts of a single denominational group to widen the field of its service, but developed out of a local community impulse.

The settlers of Parma were forced, almost at the outset, into a coöperative movement essential to the prosperity of the little town and its tributary farmlands. The church is an expression of the community spirit developed by that experience. But it was the women of Parma, not the men, who really carried the idea of coöperation over from the economic field into the church.

Parma is in the lower end of the Boise Valley, in Canyon County, about four miles from the junction of the Boise and the Snake rivers. This part of the country was settled first by miners attracted by the discovery of gold in the Boise basin. Not satisfied with the work in the mines, they began to settle on the land and to raise hay and grain. Then gradually came pioneers from the east, crossing the plains in canvas wagons in search of new homes. Among these earliest settlers around the Parma that was to be were broad-minded men and women who wished to build for the future, and down through the years have come others like

them. The result is the Parma of to-day, a community which has accomplished much because it pulls together.

### LESSONS IN COÖPERATION

Of course, irrigation, without which no land in Parma community is farmed, gives a steady, every-day lesson in coöperation. The early settlements were all in a narrow strip along the river. It was thought that the higher land and hills never would produce anything but sagebrush. With irrigation, however, came development. To-day, the Farmers' Coöperative Ditch, which waters most of the Parma land, is one of the best managed systems of irrigation in the state, because the directors are public-spirited men, willing to give of their time without stint.

The question of a church came up early in the history of the community. In the beginning Parma experienced various denominational trials: Methodists, Baptists, Christians, Presbyterians and others, all tried and failed. It was the usual story. Only those who belonged to the particular kind of a church making the struggle would be interested. All the rest were on the side lines watching the show. An attempt was made at least to keep a Sunday school going, but there were long stretches of time when there was nothing whatever in the way of religious ministry.

At last, some of the mothers determined to have a continuous church organization and a regular Sunday school, and they invited President W. J. Boone, of the College of Idaho, in Caldwell, to come down and help them establish a permanent church. A Presbyterian church was organized on the seventh day of May, 1899, with thirteen members—eleven women and two men. There were few, if any, Presbyterians in this early group, and perhaps for that very reason people of many denominations found it possible to agree on this church. The important point is, however, that from the very first there was a vision of a real community church. Here was a group of people willing to sacrifice their denominational connections in order that the community might have a church. There were objections

to a union church because there would be no church board behind it. But the people knew that they needed an organization "broad enough to get away from denominationalism."

### THE FIRST BUILDING

The next problem was a church building. In the fall of that year a call was issued to all women interested in the advancement of the community to meet and consider, first, the ways and means for providing a home for the new church organization, and, secondly, the question of raising the moral standards of the village. With the coming of the railroad, some years previously, the little settlement had developed into a village, with the drawbacks that usually accompany the mushroom growth of a frontier community. A saloon had been started, gambling was not prohibited and municipal regulations were conspicuous by their absence. The community was at the mercy of the lawless.

Ten women became the charter members of the Amphictyonic Council, or Council of Neighbors, and made it the center of coöperation in all matters concerning the general welfare of the village. The campaign for a church building seemed a heavy task and meant earnest effort and hard work for so small a company, but the women were all enthusiastic and it was they who did most of the soliciting. A general merchandise store had been started in 1898, and traveling men were beginning to come in with goods to sell. When these salesmen received an order, the storekeeper would tell them of the work for a new church and usually a donation was forthcoming. Winter was coming on. The women realized that they would need a stove in their new building when it was completed and appealed to a hardware firm in Boise. Not only did the firm send them a stove, but with it a note praising the grit of a little place the size of Parma in starting a church. There were discouragements naturally, but in due time and with some help from the mission board, the church was finished and dedicated without a dollar of indebtedness.

The real growth of the village began in 1900, with an

influx of people from the middle west and the east, the greater proportion coming from Illinois. One man, in particular, a former resident of Illinois, believed in the church idea. Previous to their starting, he said to the cousin who had interested him in going west: "Before we go out to Idaho to help develop that country, I want a distinct understanding that we join the church and boost that too. I do not want to raise my children without a good church. We all want to get in and help." That man is now Lieutenant Governor of Idaho. The next February, eighteen newcomers, representing a number of different denominations, joined the church, which thus received a great impetus.

### BEGINNINGS OF SELF-SUPPORT

Up to this time there had been no resident pastor. There was preaching once a week, on Sunday night, and the members paid $100 a year towards the pastor's support. Owing to its inability to afford a pastor of its own, the church had been grouped first with the Tucker and later with the Roswell church. It was felt, however, that the church needed a preacher who would live in the community, and by "raking and scraping and planning," as one who joined at that time described it, the members finally got $900 pledged for a full-time minister. At the same time the church became self-supporting, relinquishing the home mission aid it had previously received.

The people of Parma, as has been seen, had wanted a community church from the first and the realization of their ideal was finally made possible by the generosity of a Mrs. Kirkpatrick who, after the war, offered $20,000 towards a new building. It was agreed, under the leadership of the Rev. Paul Gauss, who had come to the pastorate in 1917, that the new church should be more than ever a real community church, though still retaining its Presbyterian allegiance. The pastor pointed out that if the community idea was to be carried out, the members of the United Presbyterian Church, which had been started some years previ-

ously, must be invited to join. The situation was not without delicacy, but all difficulties were tactfully overcome, most of the members of the United Presbyterian Church were transferred to the new community church and all of the elders of the smaller organization who joined the larger received similar office. The new church plant, including a community house, was completed and dedicated on October 31, 1920, and in the two years following this dedication the number of members nearly doubled.

### A VILLAGE CHURCH PLANNED TO MEET VILLAGE NEEDS

This is indeed a church of the open door, for any organization or individual can use any part of the church or community house without charge. It is a quiet, practical place of service. The substantial church building is of white brick and stone, with stained glass windows. The Sunday school assembly room is in the basement. Here also are classrooms which can all be thrown open, making, with the assembly room, a dining-room large enough to seat two hundred and twenty-five people. The kitchen, in the furnishing of which all the women's organizations in the church helped, is equipped with everything a kitchen should have—electric range, tables, shelves, cabinets, sink and a water heater. Six dozen of everything needed for serving meals and refreshments are stowed away in its drawers and shelves.

There are classrooms in the gallery of the main auditorium and in the space beneath, making, with those in the basement, sixteen in all. The restful tan and brown auditorium upstairs seats two hundred, but with the gallery and the classrooms below the gallery, seats may be placed for six hundred. All large gatherings such as farm meetings, the Lyceum lecture courses and the Chautauqua, are held in the church building, the community house filling other needs. Probably the most unusual feature of this church is its baptistry, the very presence of which in a nominally Presbyterian church indicates the wide hospitality that is offered. The architect was opposed to this being put in,

but the pastor and the building committee were convinced of the very real need for it, for this is a church not simply of Presbyterians.

The church equipment includes a stereopticon and reflectoscope, but not a moving-picture machine. The pastor has an unwritten agreement with the local movie magnate that, so long as he does not run pictures on Sunday night and leaves poor pictures alone, the church will not compete with him. This is not an agreement that the church will not buy a moving-picture machine, but only that it will not run pictures on regular show nights. The result of the agreement is clean movies in Parma, and a dark moving-picture house on Sunday nights.

The tan-colored community house stands beside the church, a well-kept lawn and hedge between them. Behind are two graveled tennis courts. In the basement of this building, which measures thirty-eight feet by sixty feet, is the gymnasium, which has a basketball floor, handball court, bowling alley and balcony. The gymnasium is used by young and old, high school and graded school, Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls, and is kept in order for constant use. It has gymnasium mats and horse, basketball, volley-ball and bowling-alley equipment. There are shower baths for men and boys across the hall and for girls upstairs. On the landing going upstairs is a glass-enclosed cabinet where the outside "jackets" of new books in the library are posted. Upstairs, a number of rooms open from a central hall, one of which is the girls' clubroom, cozily furnished with leather couch, wicker chairs and a blue and brown rug.

There is a pleasant room where boys play checkers and other games by the hour on long winter evenings. A small assembly room is nominally the "Friendly Men's Room," but other organizations may use it, commercial, civic, inspirational, educational and philanthropic meetings of every kind being held there. The Lettuce Growers' Association even "slipped over" a meeting in this room one Sunday afternoon. The public library of the village, which was started in an early day by the Amphictyonic Council, has its home in the community house, the village paying a small

KIRKPATRICK MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CHURCH

BOY SCOUTS OF THE PARMA TROOP ABOUT TO START ON A CAMPING TRIP

rent. Next to the library is the Radio room, where every night an absorbed audience of boys, members of the Radio Sunday School Class and their buddies, gather to "listen in." Lastly, there is the pastor's study and office, undoubtedly the busiest room of all. The community house is the one common meeting place in Parma. Open every day in the week, it is the center of the life of the village, thirty-five thousand visitors passing through its door annually.

The land owned by the church is valued at $2,300, the church building at $34,000 and the community building at $17,000. The pleasant bungalow manse is valued at $3,000. There is a $15,000 church debt to the Presbyterian Board of Church Erection on which 4 per cent. interest is paid, and a certain amount of which is paid off every year. A total amount of $32,000 insurance is carried—$7,500 on the community building and $24,000 on the church.

### HOW THE BILLS ARE PAID

The church is supported by practically the entire community, the whole project being financed by an annual community canvass. No money-making schemes, such as bazaars or socials with a price attached, are employed, nor is a charge made for any meetings held in the church. That is against the policy of the church. Everything is covered by the budget. It is even the ideal of the church to include the entire expense of the Sunday school in the church budget, so that the Sunday school may give all the money it raises to benevolences.

A definite time is set apart in the program of the year for the budget drive. The three boards of the church, Session, Trustees and Deacons, meet and formulate budgets of local expense and of benevolence. The former contains the following items: pastor's salary, janitor's salary, fuel, light, Sunday school, telephone, printing, choir leader and music, manse note, insurance, buildings, upkeep, water and miscellaneous.

A special Sunday is appointed for the budget drive. Preparatory work is done from the pulpit for several Sun-

days beforehand, and people are informed as to the date of the canvass through a letter to them during the week preceding, a card being enclosed presenting the amounts needed. Last year an advertisement on "What the Budget Means" appeared in the Parma *Review* the week before the canvass and was then printed separately and handed out at church services.

The budget is presented to the congregation publicly on the Sunday morning of the canvass. No one is solicited at that or any other service. The people who are to make the canvass, about thirty-five in all, meet at two o'clock that afternoon. The details of the work are explained to them and any special matters pertaining to the solicitation. They then go out in teams of two, with pledge cards on which is printed "This pledge is purely voluntary and may be recalled at any time by giving notice." The village and the surrounding country directly tributary to Parma and included in Parma community are divided into districts for this "every resident" community canvass. No family is passed by unless it is helping to support one of the two other churches in the village—the Catholic, which has seventy-five members, or the Nazarene with nineteen resident members, or one of the three small country churches in the area tributary to Parma. Every one else is seen. The canvassers explain that the budget covers the entire work of the church—salaries, incidental expenses and community house operating expenses for the coming year, as well as benevolences; and that if the budget is raised, no further appeals for any of this work will be made through the year. They also explain that the church treasurer will remit benevolence money to any denominational board desired.

### MEMBERSHIP—DIVERSIFIED BUT UNITED

The membership of the Parma Church is significant of the breadth of its appeal. Among the four hundred and fifteen members are to be found representatives of sixteen different denominations or sects: Methodist, Lutheran, Christian, Baptist, Congregational, Dutch Reformed, United

Brethren, Episcopal, Church of the Brethren, Nazarenes, Church of England, Presbyterian, United Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Catholic and Mormon. The ideal of the pastor is to make all Protestants feel, when they join this community church that they are not becoming Presbyterians; they are retaining whatever denominational allegiance they may have professed in the past, or may revert to in the future, but for the time being, so long as they are living in Parma, they are members of a church that is doing the work of the Kingdom in that community. The way the pastor put the matter to a Disciple who joined the church was that he wanted the man's membership not to make him a Presbyterian but to make him a better Disciple, and that he would feel disappointed if, when at any time he left Parma and went to a place where he found a Christian church, he failed to join it.

This fellowship in the Parma church of men and women of all denominations is made possible because the emphasis is placed upon those things which all have in common, while special denominational beliefs are kept in the background. "There is," the pastor declared, "enough of the Gospel of Christ universally accepted to make a vital appeal. The minister who tries to ride theological hobbies will not be a success in a small town community church. The moment you get a man with a hobby you will find some one in the audience to disagree with him. I don't believe, for instance, that a dozen people in this community know whether I am a fundamentalist or not. I don't preach special doctrines but I do preach the Kingdom of God as well as I know how." The Parma church, however, goes farther than mere avoidance of possible points of difference. It endeavors in a positive manner to make members of different denominations feel as much at home as possible. Thus, as has been seen, for the sake of its immersionist members a baptistry was installed at considerable expense; for members of liturgical denominations there is a greater frequency of communion than is usual in most Presbyterian churches, while various types of prayer meetings are adapted to the needs of various groups of members.

A more detailed analysis of the membership only emphasizes the wide appeal of this church. Here is no marked disproportion between the sexes, since men make up 44 per cent. of the total membership. Nor, as is so frequently found, is the membership overweighted with older age groups. Here one-fourth of the members are less than twenty-one years of age. Again, the common distinction between active and inactive members is hardly applicable here. Of the three hundred and forty-nine resident members all but seventeen take an active part in the church life and work. The wide reach of the church is indicated by the fact that forty-seven of its one hundred and sixty-seven member-families live more than one mile distant.

Results like these are not brought about by accident. The membership is carefully shepherded according to definite plan. The church parish is divided into nineteen separate groups and each group has its leader. Twice a year these group leaders make a survey of the entire community, getting a record of each person's church interest. A card is made out and kept up to date for each family in the community. The group leaders keep in personal touch with the people in their respective groups by calling frequently and by inviting them to all special meetings. If they hear any complaints by members, whether trivial or otherwise, they report them at once so that the matter may be followed up and adjusted immediately.

### SYSTEMATIC EVANGELISM

Evangelism is carried on quietly, but with enthusiasm. The church members make it a definite responsibility of their own to bring in those who are not in the church. A farmer, approaching middle age, joined the church last year. His family were church members but he had never joined. He was brought into the church simply by a group of men seeing him often, explaining what the church and their belief meant to them, telling him why they felt a man should get into the church, showing him he was wanted.

Evangelistic meetings are never held more frequently than

once a year, nor for twelve years has any outside help been called in. On the whole, it seems to this church the better plan to manage and carry on its own meetings. Too often sensationalism is the dominant note struck by an evangelist imported from the outside. Evangelism in Parma, the members feel, is their own job. The people to be brought into the church are their own friends and neighbors. Why send for a stranger to reason with them? Careful preparation precedes the meetings. The matter is presented to the congregation, dates are announced and people are asked to keep that period free. On Sunday evenings from January to Easter, the service is made particularly evangelistic and invitation is given to those who are willing to make a new stand for Jesus Christ. Each Sunday evening those who made their declaration the week before are received into church membership, and there is constant opportunity for reconsecration of those that are already members. A letter concerning these meetings, containing practical suggestions as to how each individual can contribute to their success, is sent out early in January.

The regular series of meetings comes the last two weeks in March. They are well advertised by paid advertisements, pamphlets, bulletin boards and personal invitations. "The Life and Purpose of the Church" was the general topic at a recent series of meetings. The pastor did the preaching. The choir leader led the singing. The group leaders gave the general invitation. Personal work was carried on through the period of meetings by a special Personal Work Committee, which received a list of names from the pastor, talked privately with each person quietly, and then reported back to the pastor, leaving him to complete the work. These meetings are well conducted and accomplish much. But the real secret of the success of this church in winning new members is that evangelism is looked upon by the members and the pastor as an "every-day" rather than as a "once-a-year" job.

REGULAR RELIGIOUS MINISTRY

The work of the church can be grouped almost entirely under four heads which are keynotes in its program. These are Evangelization, Social Service, Missionary Work, and Religious Education. The Community House has its place under two heads of this program—chiefly under Social Service, of which the large end is recreation, but also under Religious Education.

The morning and evening services held each Sunday have an average attendance respectively of one hundred and fifty and one hundred and seventy-five. From thirty to thirty-five were attending in the evening when Mr. Gauss came. He has brought the average attendance up to one hundred and seventy-five by emphasizing that service and by advertising his themes. Thirty per cent. of the morning audience are men; 40 per cent. at night are men. Women make up 40 per cent. of the attendance at both services. In the morning, 15 per cent. of the audience are young people; at night, 20 per cent. Children make up 15 per cent. of the morning audience, and for their benefit there is a children's sermon. Ten per cent. of the audience in the morning and 20 per cent. at night are non-church members.

Bible school comes at ten o'clock, before the morning service, and is so well attended that the classes overflow into the community house. Music is furnished by the regular Sunday school orchestra, and the singing is enthusiastic. Out of a total enrollment of three hundred and fifty-five, the average attendance is two hundred and twelve. Eleven of the nineteen classes are organized, and every class has a separate meeting place. Thirty-five names are on the Cradle Roll, and forty on that of the Home Department, which was started fourteen years ago with three members.

Regular teachers' meetings are held once a month, and the course for the Teachers' Training Class is varied from year to year to avoid monotony. This year's plan embraces a series of six teachers' conferences at which outside speakers talk along special lines, a discussion following.

These six conferences come after a supper for the teachers on Wednesday nights.

A Vacation Bible School with six classes was held last summer for the first time, general invitation being extended to all the children in the village. The course included Bible instruction and craft work, and at the end of it came "commencement," with a demonstration of the work done, followed by a picnic the next day. Fifty-two children remained throughout the two weeks.

Two classes of the Bible school stand out as distinct organizations of the church. The Loyal Sisters' Bible Class of seventy-two members does the work of a Ladies' Aid Society, and the Friendly Men's class of sixty-five occupies the place of a Brotherhood. Both of these organizations have regular class sessions every Sunday and a business meeting once a month.

Two nights in the week, the Friendly Men's Room in the Community House is reserved for choir practice. The church music is taken care of by a regular paid choir leader. Here again the church and the school and the village work together. The choir leader who has been there nine years is also the music director of the village schools and of several country schools.

All church meetings and events are well advertised. The church believes in letting every one know everything that is going on. The publicity is conducted on a sort of give and take plan. Mr. Gauss will write up a wedding for the editor and the editor, in turn, will give him space for publicity. At one time, Mr. Gauss carried on the paper for six weeks while the editor was away. Letters and postals are used for anouncements of special meetings and special issues before the church. Paid advertisements are often put in the paper. Other advertising devices are bulletin boards, big charts, window cards and dodgers. One Sunday night a month is "request service," a request being made for suggestions of definite themes for that night.

### ORGANIZATIONS ON THE JOB

Outside of the Sunday school, there are eleven church organizations with a total enrollment of three hundred and seventy-three. One hundred and fifty-six of the members are women over eighteen. The rest are under that age; one hundred and six being boys and one hundred and eleven girls. About one-third of the total number live in the country. The church is not overorganized. There is a place for every one. But no organization is allowed to function after it has outlived its usefulness.

The total receipts of the organizations amounted to $1,042.43 last year; the total expenditures were $1,008.15. A total of $465.20 was devoted to missions (including mission study books) and $176.60 to other benevolences and for local charity.

All of the organizations have their various committees. One of the most helpful things in the working of these organizations is the plan of "sponsoring," by which each older organization "sponsors" a younger one. The Ladies' Missionary Society, for example, "sponsors" the Senior Christian Endeavor Society, and because last year the young people had a hard time collecting money for refreshments, the women are now providing the refreshments for their socials. The plan of sponsoring is helpful to both parties: it steadies the younger organizations and it brings the older groups into contact with the younger.

It is true, of course, that Parma has been unusually fortunate in her pastors. Mr. Gauss' predecessor, Mr. Griffin, made a notable record during the six years of his pastorate in organizing and developing the spirit of loyalty to the church. Mr. Gauss has carried on and amplified the work so ably begun, infusing it with the spirit of his own enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the feature that calls for most emphasis in the Kirkpatrick Memorial Church of Parma is that it is in no sense a "one-man" enterprise. No rural church is better adapted to profit from the energy and enthusiasm of its pastor, but the driving force behind the church is the community itself and the coöperative spirit

which has developed in the community. The people of Parma, as this story has shown, knew precisely the kind of church that they wanted and they did not rest until they got it. They know also precisely the kind of pastor that they want, and they would be satisfied with no man who fell short of their standard. For these reasons the church at Parma may perhaps be best described as the outstanding instance in rural America of a community's self-determination in its religious affairs.

# Chapter III

## MUCH IN LITTLE

## CANOGA, N. Y.

*Proof positive that even in a small community, which can never grow larger, the church can yet grow in service.*

The little hamlet of Canoga, in Seneca County, New York, is picturesquely situated on the northwestern point of Cayuga Lake. It is a small agricultural community of about four hundred souls, with twenty-five families living in as many homes built about its only street. Its public buildings comprise the Presbyterian Church, the Town Hall, the District School and the Community House. The name Canoga, or "Sweet Water," is derived from the spring just outside the hamlet, where Iroquois Indians used to camp, and near by stands a monument to the memory of Red Jacket, a Seneca chief famous in Revolutionary days. Soon after the Revolution settlers started coming from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Massachusetts, gradually displacing the Indians who had formerly cultivated the region, and by the late 'fifties of the last century the white men had developed a prosperous farming community.

That, in brief, is the whole story of Canoga, and in the past sixty or seventy years there has been little to add to it. The industrial development, through railroads and a canal, of Seneca Falls, seven miles away, effectually arrested the growth of its smaller neighbor. Canoga remains to-day what it has always been—a little hamlet entirely engrossed in agriculture. The march of progress seems to have passed it by; its farmers go to Seneca Falls to do their trading; its population has declined and is likely to grow smaller rather than larger; the best it can hope for

is a continuation of its present modest competence as a farming community.

### THE DILEMMA OF THE SMALL CHURCH

There was a time, before the industrial revolution, which exalted Seneca Falls and depressed Canoga, when the little hamlet supported two churches, a Methodist and a Presbyterian; but by 1919 all that was left of the former were some ruins blackened by fire, while the latter stood bleak, unpainted and almost forgotten by its congregation. Canoga, in fact, presents in rather an acute form a religious problem that is a commonplace of rural America. Here was a little place, apparently too small to support a church with a full-time minister, and with no hope of increased population. What could it do about its spiritual life?

There are two obvious answers to that constantly recurring question. One is a circuit or a student ministry, perhaps assisted by a minimum amount of aid from the home mission board; the other is home mission aid sufficient to make possible a full-time minister. Canoga, for some years, had chosen, rather half-heartedly, the former answer. Since 1825, thirty-one ministers had served the Presbyterian church, and only five of them had been installed or ordained. Of late years students from Auburn Seminary had conducted services at irregular intervals, this spasmodic ministry being partially supported by an annual grant of $100 from the home mission board. Beyond the privileges of irregular Sunday worship, the church had no organization, nor had it any regular budget for maintenance. For the year 1917-18 the total contributions for benevolences amounted to sixteen dollars, while $200 was raised by the church membership to pay for the irregular services of its student-pastors.

It was a discouraging situation, and it was hardly surprising that the two dozen members listlessly regarded a full-time ministry for their church as a possibility too remote to be worthy of serious consideration. They may have

hoped one day to be able to supply their church not only with the coat of paint it so sorely needed but also with a cellar and a furnace, which would have added considerably to the attractions of the occasional winter services; but for a resident, full-time minister it is safe to say they had never even dared to hope. The privilege of instilling this hope into the hearts of the people of Canoga was reserved for the last of the long line of student-pastors.

### A FULL-TIME PASTOR

During the summer that he served as the incumbent of Canoga church, young Howard Mickelsen, a student of Auburn Seminary, became interested in the place and the people. A farmer's son himself, he loved the land and knew the way to the hearts of an agricultural community. To his enthusiasm there seemed nothing strange or impossible in the idea of this picturesque little hamlet, with its four hundred souls and its historic past, being ministered to by a permanent, resident pastor. Accordingly, in the spring of 1919, Mr. Mickelsen, having graduated and married, went to the home mission board of the Presbyterian Church and asked for a grant which should make it possible for him to undertake the pastorate of the church at Canoga. The board granted $400, and young Mickelsen took up the work that he had chosen.

In the first year of Mr. Mickelsen's full-time pastorate the thirty-six members of the church raised $600 or $16.66 per capita. During 1920-21 the membership increased to forty-three and the budget to $800 or $18.37 per capita. During 1921-22 the membership climbed to seventy-five and the budget to $1,365 or $18.20 per capita. Canoga doubled its contribution by doubling its membership. While in 1921 it contributed $1,365 against $800 of the preceding year, yet the per capita share was seventeen cents less in 1921. In other words, while it is a poor community and has no prospect of becoming richer, yet it increased its budget by increasing its membership and thereby reduced the average per capita contribution.

THE BOY SCOUT FLOAT AT CANOGA'S FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

THE LITTLE COMMUNITY, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH, SUPPORTS A FLOURISHING DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION

When the pastor first laid the budget of $600 before the church in 1919, his tiny congregation said: "It can't be done." With preliminary training in the duties of stewardship, however, the congregation was prepared for the every-member canvass, and before the day of the canvass one-fourth of the church membership had signed stewardship cards. Then, one Sunday morning, Canoga was surprised to find that it had raised more than its quota for the church as well as special funds for the Red Cross, the China Famine Fund and local relief.

### FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Going from one phase of organization to another the Canoga congregation next considered a Ladies' Aid Society. But Canoga had no vestige of activity that could be so utilized. Invitations were accordingly sent asking all the women in the community to meet at the parsonage. Twenty responded, and were duly organized under an efficient president. The Ladies' Aid Society had enough to occupy it after the long period of neglect the church had known. This organization provided Canoga church with an individual communion set, new hymnals and a furnace. The church was painted for the first time in many years. The Ladies' Aid also encouraged community interest in dramatics, and plays were staged not only in Canoga but in three neighboring towns and return engagements were booked. This society also conducted a church bazaar that netted $225. During the summer the beautiful Lake Cayuga at their doors provided an ideal playground for the church members, and shore suppers and picnics participated in by the congregation as a corporate religious body became a regular part of community life.

### MEN AND WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

If Canoga's size is predetermined by outside economic influences, there are no limits to the activities of its church members under the broad, constructive policy of its newest

pastor. The physical content of the one-room church building was the first index to the increased activities of its members. It suddenly became too small for the various meetings, and while there were no available funds for the ambitious project yet the congregation began to think of a community house. A sad reminder of economic decay in Canoga was an empty, well-built two-story building of brick, formerly a store, which lent itself ideally to the purpose. While the Geneva Presbytery was being entertained in Canoga the visitors heard of the desire of their hosts and presented them with $700. The first floor of the building was divided into a kitchen and a larger room with a movable platform and chairs. The upper story, with a thirteen foot ceiling, was reserved for basketball.

The men of Canoga parish were not to be surpassed by the women. Besides supporting the new program they organized themselves into a Bible Class with a membership of fourteen, after they felt they had outgrown a large mixed class under their capable leader. It is to the Men's Sunday School Class that the church owes its basement with a cement floor, as well as the cement walk outside the building. This class has successfully linked the life of the community to the church by arranging meetings in the community house to popularize the work of the Farm Bureau.

About the same time another example was furnished by a community leader whose hobby is farming on the latest scientific principles. This progressive leader employed a trained farmer, from the Agricultural Department of Cornell University at Ithaca, to take charge and to coöperate with the County Agent. This demonstration of the ways and means of up-to-date agriculture, of improving and increasing the output of a typical Canoga farm will have its influence in the community. The County Agent has expressed his expert opinion that Canoga's ideal situation between Cayuga and Seneca lakes dowers the little farming hamlet with fertile soil. This advantage promises a future development that is in keeping with Canoga's economic life, which may find the proximity of a large urban center a boon instead of a menace.

### THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SHARE

In these various economic and social ways leaders have emerged in the little community to link its secular life with that of its church. But having enlisted the support and loyalty of the elders in the hamlet the pastor turned his attention to that important nucleus, the younger generation. For the first time Canoga found its church offering a continuous, well-organized Sunday school, with age and sex groups that would ensure a supply of leaders. The Sunday school to-day has four organized departments with graded lessons, a three-year training course for teachers, and a Home Department for invalids and those unable to attend. The Sunday school has an enrollment of eighty-four of all ages against the adult membership of the church which amounts to seventy-five.

The pastor has also utilized his religious organization for social and recreational purposes. Nothing was easier than to enroll the boy's Sunday school class into a Scout Troop, or for the pastor's wife to organize the girl's class into the Bluebird Club. The Boy Scout Troop of fourteen members, and the Bluebirds with nineteen, constitute the nucleus of all the social activities of the young folks. In the Christian Endeavor Society a membership of forty brings these two clubs into contact with the rest of the junior church members, and as a body they arrange suppers, special picnics, athletic events and financial campaigns as their share of the church program. The funds derived from one of the banquets has enabled them to send delegates to a Young People's Conference.

### THE CHURCH LEADS THE COMMUNITY

With the church as a touchstone for the life of Canoga it is natural to find the community availing itself of the church's powers of organization. The community now takes part in socials, lake-side picnics, dramatics, athletics and economic conferences that concern the needs of the sole industry of Canoga. A notable social event was the

Fourth of July celebration, when a parade of floats decorated by the church and community represented the manifold activities of all ages and groups in Canoga. The first motion-picture exhibit in Canoga was shown on a screen stretched along the wall of the church community house, and proved an attraction for people living in all the neighboring villages. The experiment has worked. Neither the people nor the home mission board would go back to the old plan of hit-or-miss preachings. It is worth while for the people, the minister and the board to coöperate in making the church central as it now is in Canoga's life.

This inspiring story of service to its community by the church is one of humble and small beginnings. Canoga had reached a stage when it was content to hold itself together in an economic way, with no future of any sort, with an uninspiring present. But the sudden revival of its church has put a new spirit into the community. Even its agricultural assets may look to increase in value with the adoption of scientific farming methods. What the church has done for Canoga the community may now learn to do for itself. If Canoga once felt hampered and depressed by larger and more flourishing neighbors, her church has now taught her to use that rich and large service which brings perfect freedom.

# Chapter IV

## DIGGING OUT THE BOYS

## BINGHAM CANYON, UTAH

*The story of a drab rural-industrial community and of what one church has accomplished, especially for the boys, in the biggest copper camp in the world.*

In the agricultural community, men live on the land because they love it. The population is usually unshifting and stable, except for some of the young people who "seek their acres of diamonds" in the city. A certain spirit of community pride is in the air and leading citizens are found encouraging their people to make their "home town" a better place to live in. In such a community a church may grow and become the center of all activity. It knows its people and can depend upon them from year to year. But what of the church in a rural-industrial mining community that is here to-day and gone to-morrow—in population as shifting as is the tide? Men live there not because they want to. They care nothing for civic betterment. They come to dig and to get out. They have no ties, no responsibility, no permanent desire for a better place to live in. If the mines here close, others are opened elsewhere; and almost overnight, perhaps 80 per cent. of the population moves away. On such a foundation what kind of a church can be built? The Methodist church of Bingham Canyon knows only too well.

"Bingham Canyon is the toughest town in Utah," men of the canyon said, and they said it proudly. This greatest copper camp in the world lies deep in a narrow gorge of the Oquirrh Mountains, twenty miles south of Salt Lake City. Along the one street that snakes its crazy way for



11700

thirteen miles through the canyon live the nine thousand inhabitants, one-half of whom are foreigners and 30 per cent. Mormons.

On either side of the canyon rise bald, brown peaks, some six thousand feet above sea level, and on their treeless slopes great mining corporations are engaged in literally "moving mountains." Continuous terrific blastings loosen thousands of tons at one bombardment. High above the dismal town on a cable reaching from Bingham to the smelter of Garfield eight miles away, the ore buckets continually ply forth and back. The railroad, with its high trestles and its two hundred miles of trackage winding about and crosscutting the mountains looks like bands around the peaks; the engines and cars on the upper levels seem just toy trains and the men mere pigmies.

When one visits the camp for the first time, having traveled through the fertile irrigated lands of the beautiful Salt Lake Valley, with its fine crops, orchards, and lines of tall, slender poplar trees, one is at first overcome by the strange, austere raw wildness of the place. The huddled rows and tiers of little unpainted tumble-down shacks look as if they might have been hurled down from the mountains in chaotic confusion and been fortunate enough to have lodged somehow in the sands right side up. Between the rows of houses are steep wooden steps, some of them making one almost dizzy to climb. Backyards are gaudy with a variety of apparel strung along on sagging, overworked clotheslines. The doorways of the front row of houses along Main Street open onto the very sidewalk. The gorge is less than three hundred feet wide and the street in some places is so narrow that autos can hardly pass one another. Here and there, where the mines have hurled great heaps of rocks and dirt down the gully, huge walls of log cribbing have been thrown up to keep it from falling into Main Street. Pool-rooms, homes, city hall, post office, more homes, cribbing, movie-theaters, restaurants, stores—all are shuffled in together. There are no lawns, no yards, no trees nor gardens, nor any places for them. Along the street on one side, under the three-foot board sidewalk, runs

Bingham Creek, a narrow coppery stream that rushes down through the canyon, serving as a sewer for the camp and as a bathing place for the numerous pigs that run loose in Lower Bingham; and becoming, in the spring, a torrent that strikes terror among the people when houses are wrecked by its treacherous floods, great gutters and holes are gorged out of the road, and lives endangered.

### A FLEETING CONGREGATION

In 1919 Bingham was a "wide open" town where poverty was eating its way into the hearts of men. Gambling, card-playing, vice and drinking were all prevalent; gangs of boys were perpetrating all sorts of crimes, with headquarters in an abandoned mine tunnel not a mile from the Methodist Episcopal Church. And the church itself? It's building was new but scarcely better than a barn—just a two-story, gray, ugly structure with an auditorium seating one hundred and fifty and on the first floor a bleak little study, a social room whose only modern conveniences were electric lights, a drinking fountain and a very small kitchen. Next door, an old shack with two dark rooms—dark because a mountain of dirt backed up to them—had until then served as a parsonage—a ramshackle cabin with two smelly damp rooms, wedged in between the church and the mine dump-heap.

A new parsonage was being built just behind the church, but to enter it one must go through the church, for the back door of the church is only eight feet from the front door of the manse, and the only place from which a picture can be taken of it is the roof of the church or the side of the mountain. In this church there were, in 1919, four active members, one with a broken hip. On the church roll there were forty-six names and thirty-three of them were those of persons who no longer lived in the community. There were six members living in outlying districts who assisted in neighborhood Sunday school work but who never got to church. More than half the rest frankly admitted they were no longer living Christian lives.

There was no systematic handling of church funds. No attempt was being made to reach foreigners and no clubs or societies were organized for sociability or service among the various groups. The church was practically a dead organization in the heart of an indifferent, unwieldy parish. Added to these difficulties the mines were running on a three-shift schedule, so that men worked Sundays as well as week days and at night as by day. The population was made up of cliques and non-coöperative groups that were as shifting as the sands of the Sahara.

### THE NEED TO REACH THE BOYS

Into this treeless camp, with all its bitterness, roughness, restlessness and indifference, with its lack of stability and ideals, came the Rev. Lester P. Fagen, pastor, painter, nature lover, authority on birds and trees and a student of natural science and sociology—a man of dynamic personality and a born "builder of souls," unafraid of the truth, a trained and experienced man among men. The first decision he made as he surveyed the situation was that whatever else he accomplished he must in some way reach the *boys*, and in spite of the barriers that looked as high as the Oquirrh peaks about him, he set out to "break through." Side by side with the miners who went daily to dig out copper underground went Mr. Fagen to dig out *boys*—throughout the length of the canyon.

And while he was getting acquainted he was beginning the reorganization of his church, which was to become known as the "House of Happiness." Seven weeks of cottage prayer meetings were held, after which a great revival took place. At the beginning, forty were converted and twenty-two became church members. Later, forty more were converted and more than a score joined the church on confession of faith.

Meanwhile the new parsonage had been completed and Mr. and Mrs. Fagen kept open house with special invitations to the *boys* of the canyon. A systematic handling of finances was introduced and an every-member canvass was

made. All money has ever since been raised by a regular budget system and duplex envelopes are used. Five years ago the total amount raised for benevolences was $91, but in 1922 it amounted to $731. Salaries in 1917 were only $546; last year the figure was $1,739. To interest Bingham Canyon in a get-together program, a direct appeal was made to every group—old and young, men, women, boys, girls, little folks and foreigners. Wherever the pastor found a common interest even smoldering, he formed an organization around it. He found a group of boys and girls going off Sunday afternoons and taking pictures, some of them neither artistic nor particularly desirable. One day he asked them how they would like to have a camera club. They at once grew enthusiastic; the group was organized and began to learn to do expert photography, to take freak pictures and to make slides.

Mr. Fagen is extremely adept at character-reading, and last year he formed a study group in this subject, among those interested being several school teachers, who in turn told their pupils about it. Before he knew it, the pastor was swamped by appeals for interviews. Pupils were even excused during leisure periods to go from the school to the pastor's study. This character class was the indirect means of bringing to him every senior and junior and more than half the rest of the high school pupils. Mormons came and Roman Catholics and children of various denominations, and for weeks every minute of every available hour was filled with these interviews. The problem of the young people was in a fair way to solution.

Meanwhile the Ladies' Aid and the Mission Society were reorganized and both began to raise money for carrying on their respective work. The two deaconesses and the assistant parish worker, who are all members of the church staff, began classes in sewing, basketry and whittling.

And chief of all—the Boy Scouts were organized. One by one the boys of the canyon became interested, for Mr. Fagen is an experienced scout master. Many of the boys of the old tunnel gang became scouts; and in two years twenty-four of them became church members. Girl Scouts,

Mountain Boys and Pioneer Girls were also organized and are the most active young people's groups of the church. Regular weekly athletic periods are conducted under Mr. Fagen's leadership. Once a year a demonstration week is observed when the people of the canyon are shown what the boys can do. There are drills and yells, cheers and scout craft exhibitions. Mr. Fagen says his scouts are his best advertisers.

### THE WAY TO THE PROMISED LAND

After the pastor had his scouts ready for action he was without any place to hike with them. To study nature where there were no trees was impossible. Camping trips must be taken; but no suitable camp ground was to be found in this dingy copper camp. Then came a solution which was a triumph in every way. On the other side of West Mountain was Middle Canyon, a wild, green country of pines, quaking aspens and alders, where a stream wound its way through a beautiful valley, where berries grew abundantly and belonged to whoever might pick them.

There also were the State Epworth League buildings which were well equipped for campers and available at all times. To reach this playground the pastor and his scouts must hike through a mine tunnel two and one-half miles in pitchy darkness. But what should a group of sturdy lads care for that? They slosh through the muddy hole in the mountain with their little carbide lights and actually enjoy the trip. Even the girls go over to Middle Canyon from time to time for picnics. This, then, became Bingham Canyon's playground and the scene of many bacon bats, of nature study talks and of story-telling, and where Mr. Fagen and his boys went over their problems together and became fast friends. This Utah Metals mine tunnel, which is closed to the public except during the hours before the morning and evening shifts go into the mines, has served, like the Red Sea of old, to lead the boys of Bingham Canyon into a wonderful land, which they have found as beautiful as was the Promised Land to the children of Israel.

An every-day-in-the-year program was adopted as soon as the groups were organized, in which was included every kind of entertainment from a formal reception to an egg hunt. Special days are celebrated. Ghost parties, picnics, hikes, father and son and mother and daughter banquets, May breakfasts, flower parties, chicken dinners, council meetings, and numberless other social occasions are enjoyed by old and young.

While the work was being developed at the "House of Happiness" the two deaconesses and the assistant were reorganizing Sunday schools at Lark and Highland Boy, two neighborhoods of Bingham, in two little one-room buildings which, as the pastor says, are "a shame to Christianity," but which are the best to be had at present. At Highland Boy most of the members are little foreigners, including Spanish lads, Austrians, Finns, Japanese, Greeks, Serbians and Italians. Adequate helpers and equipment are lacking in both Sunday schools. The memberships of the three schools at present number as follows:

| | *Membership* | *Av. Attendance* |
|---|---|---|
| Bingham ..... | 208 | 85 |
| Highland Boy ..... | 100 | 45 |
| Copperfield ..... | 60 | 35 |
| | 368 | 165 |

The Sunday school at Bingham has a membership twice the size of the church enrollment, though fifty-four of its members are also members of the church, or are on the preparatory membership list. Eight are Roman Catholics and thirteen are Mormons.

In the spring of 1921, when the community program had been in motion for eighteen months, Mr. Fagen made a survey of the community.

He learned that the population was 10,200, of whom 4,000 were unmarried men and all but 1,550 foreigners. Of the adults, there were 2,000 nominal Catholics and 2,500

nominal Mormons, leaving 1,700 Protestants, Christian Scientists, Unitarians and Orientals. The number touched by the work was 750, of whom 320 were Americans. Five hundred and eleven attended services and included:

275 Americans.
65 English.
20 Scotch, Irish, Welsh.
50 Italians.
30 Finns.
8 Greeks.
3 Japanese.
60 Others of nine nationalities.

511 Total.

One hundred and forty-three were church members, and thirty-four of these were foreigners. Groups were well organized. The church was well supported and growing.

### THE CONGREGATION VANISHES

Then like a bomb explosion the mines shut down suddenly and 80 per cent. of the population moved away. Of the new church members, all but two left town. Money grew scarce again and people once more became downhearted. Attendance at services dwindled. Leaders were lost. Mr. Fagen had especially stressed leadership training. The class had been selected from the scouts of fifteen years or older. There were eighty-five present in 1920 at a big father and son banquet, including forty-three men and forty-two boys. Before the next banquet was held the mines had closed and twenty-two of the boys had left the canyon, the results of their training lost, at least to *this* church and community. Before he could once more start the organization on the up-grade, Mr. Fagen was called away from the parish on an extended field trip and by the time he returned the church was again almost powerless, like a rudderless ship in a rough sea.

THE PASTOR, WHO IS ALSO SCOUTMASTER, AND HIS BOYS

WHAT THE BOY SCOUTS FIND AFTER HIKING TWO MILES THROUGH A TUNNEL —A WELCOME CHANGE FROM THEIR TREELESS CANYON

THE LONG UNLOVELY MAIN STREET OF BINGHAM CANYON STRAGGLES ALONG FOR THIRTEEN MILES IN THIS CLEFT BETWEEN RUGGED AND PRECIPITOUS MOUNTAINS

But Mr. Fagen is an optimist and not to be daunted. The mines were now reopening and new people were coming to Bingham, though in smaller numbers, for the wage scale had been lowered considerably. New boys found Mr. Fagen still scouting for scouts, and in order to avoid losing the interest of the older scouts who were left, he divided them into three divisions, so that all might proceed with their instruction. Foreigners were coming in rapidly and Mr. Fagen endeavored to interest them in his program, though with varied success.

Unusual ways of interesting newcomers were tried out. One Sunday night the young people of the Epworth League decided to have an out-of-door meeting. There being no place out of doors to hold it they decided to make an "out-of-doors" indoors. They brought a pile of logs into the social room and with the help of a red light bulb they made their camp fire. Cones and pine branches from Middle Canyon were strewn over the plank floor. Rugs were laid in a big circle, and to finish the setting they put up a huge out-of-door scene, painted on oil cloth not long before by Mr. Fagen to advertise Boy Scout Week. It was a scene typical of Utah, with buff-colored background of mountains and in the foreground a lake, rocks, waterfalls, and a few slender pines. About thirty were present and all sat cross-legged about the fire. By the dim light the young people lost all sense of embarrassment and made some really fine talks. Taps followed the singing and the meeting was dismissed. It had been a helpful, impressive, live service.

### GETTING ANOTHER START

And the Methodist church is to-day on the up-grade once more. Its membership numbers one hundred and seven and there are twenty-three boys and girls in a preparatory class. In the three years, there have been three hundred conversions and more than one hundred and fifty have become church members. The memberships and average attendance of the various organizations are shown as follows:

| *Organizations* | *Members* | *Average Attendance* | *Meetings a Month* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ladies' Aid | 20 | 6 | 4 |
| Mission Society | 36 | 15 | 1 |
| Girl Scouts | 15 | 7 | 4 |
| Boy Scouts | 48 | 32 | 4 |
| Pioneer Girls | 18 | 12 | 4 |
| Mountain Boys | 35 | 9 | 4 |
| Bluebirds | 18 | 9 | 4 |
| Epworth League | 25 | 12 | 4 |
| Character Club | 14 | 12 | 4 |
| Camera Club | 12 | 9 | 4 |
| Sewing Club | 51 | 16 | 4 |
| Whittling Club | 42 | 11 | 4 |
| Mothers' Jewels (infants) | 19 | | |

The Sunday schools at Lark and Highland Boy are growing and the average attendance of the school at Bingham is eighty-five. A successful Daily Vacation Bible School was held this year at Highland Boy with an enrollment of one hundred and fifteen and an average attendance of sixty-four, despite the lack of adequate equipment.

Bingham Canyon says of Mr. Fagen: "He can do anything." Men are his friends, though few in the Canyon are his followers. If by chance he goes into a pool-room, some one inevitably taps him on the shoulder and says: "Hello, Fagen, how are you? What are you doing in here? This is no place for you." But the *boys* are different. They are his pals. They have hiked with him, played with him, prayed with him and learned from him to love good books and life at its best. They are his sworn friends and he is their champion.

Plans are on foot for a new $10,000 community building now necessary in order that crowding may be eliminated and that a more direct appeal regardless of denomination and nationality may be made to the very heart and soul of Bingham Canyon. And though the life of the "House of Happiness" has been full of ups and downs, yet under the leadership of this fearless, dynamic builder it has never allowed the Cross to retreat.

The abandoned mine tunnel is abandoned still, haunted only by the ghosts of the old-time gangs. One thing is certain. Said an influential banker of Bingham Canyon: "The life of the boyhood of this camp has been completely revolutionized."

And what of the Bingham Canyon community church of to-morrow? Who can tell? The average church aims to become a permanent organization with a membership which will remain to share the responsibility of its support from year to year. All that this church can hope for is to keep alive, join hands with the people passing by, encourage them to fight on and give them its blessing—"a house by the side of the road," and in deed and in very truth a "friend to man."

It may never grow to be a great institution in number of members. Leaders will be trained here whose services may never help to develop a Bingham Canyon church—but elsewhere, as the continual shifting of population goes on, many a church will be the stronger because of the leadership of those who once lived in the greatest copper camp in the world.

# Chapter V

## MINISTERING TO THE MIGRANT

## LARNED, KANSAS

*What the Church can do for the quarter of a million migrant harvesters that annually follow the wheat crops from Texas northward.*

Very seldom is it that the average rural circuit, of three to five churches, loosely organized as perforce it must be, can come forward and assume not only local but state-wide leadership in the solution of a problem which has vexed the minds of both public and church officials. Yet this is just what the Methodist Circuit around Larned, in Pawnee County, Kansas, did.

The problem that was faced was the problem of the modern Ishmael, the migrant laborer who is the backbone of the wheat harvest. Year after year, when the wheat belt sends out its call for help it is the migrant who responds. To him wheat is just one interest, for the real migrant helps in such varied harvests as the fruit and vegetables of the Pacific Coast, the beets of Colorado, the cranberries of New England, and in winter he cuts the ice that is stored for those summers when he is sweating in the wheat fields of Kansas.

To the Kansas farmer, on the other hand, the migrant is all important, for it is he who fills Kansas with the finest wheat. Yet to the average farmer the migrant is a necessary evil. He is adjudged a radical, a negligible factor, unstable. He receives small consideration, and those who most depend upon him for emergency help are most rejoiced to see him leave when the necessity for his assistance has passed.

It was in April, 1920, that the Kansas State College of Agriculture began to explain to the farmers that harvest hands must be treated like human beings if they were expected to return year after year to help Kansas to prosperity. It was one thing to tell the farmer to treat his casual laborer humanely; it was another thing to explain just what this changed attitude entailed.

### THE APPEAL TO THE CHURCH

As one approach to the problem the college sent an urgent letter to all the clergymen in the State's wheat belt stating the problem and asking them for help. Every county agent was advised of this letter and instructed to coöperate with the clergy. There followed, as in the case of all such appeals, the usual period of doubt and hesitation that passes for consideration, but in Pawnee the county agent found one pastor and one circuit that was ready, the Methodist Circuit of Larned, Kansas, Rev. P. W. Mawdsley, pastor.

This church was ready because under the leadership of a shirt-sleeved pastor, who himself had worked as a hired hand, the circuit of four churches had for some years been doing things. All of them had grown from small groups, the oldest founded only in 1873, to congregations that well deserved the time and energy of a man like Mr. Mawdsley. Young and old have followed his leadership in all four of the churches. Much was made of social life. Even the annual improvement day of the churches became a social event when all the parish families collected around their church enjoying work as well as the meals together. Much was made of the Epworth League which was the young people's society. Here leadership was developed, frequent socials were held. Many unique ideas were tried out at these occasions which proved of great value when the circuit's peculiar opportunity came.

Two features of the program give an insight into the work and methods of this circuit. Instead of the old-fashioned Harvest Home the Larned people have a Booth Festival under the management of the Epworth Leagues of the

Circuit. On the first day of October the people bring to the County Fair Grounds their vegetables, flowers, fruits, poultry and needlework. Ribbons are the only prizes, the proceeds going to the Conference Hospital. There are athletic contests, including a baseball game and a track meet. There are other healthy amusements. All contestants must be members of the church, Sunday school or Epworth League of one of the congregations of the circuit.

Another unique feature of the program is the evangelistic work of the circuit. Evangelistic meetings are held in each of the churches every year. For the pastor to carry the full burden would require nearly two months' time. Mr. Mawdsley conceived the idea of making the people their own evangelists. A leader was selected in each church and he, in turn, selected lieutenants. Themes were prepared and the leaders were instructed. There was the usual spiritual preparation such as the holding of cottage prayer meetings. When the campaign opened in a circuit for one week each church conducted its own services. The second week it had the leadership of its pastor. The services were so arranged that the weeks which the pastor gave were consecutive. The whole campaign was over in one month and in at least one of the churches there were conversions during the week when the unassisted local leaders were in charge.

It was to a pastor and people such as these that the county agent turned with the appeal that had come. The situation was peculiarly aggravated, as is indicated by the summary of that official, which is typical of many crises that occur annually throughout the wheat belt:

"There was a steady demand for men from the first of the month for general farm work at $2 per day or $50 per month. Early in the month about 40 college boys from Indiana came to Larned in a body and that more than supplied the demand for three or four days.

"By the 15th of the month the weather conditions threatened to dry up the wheat prematurely and on the 16th the agent sent a call to the employment agencies at Hutchinson, Kansas City and Topeka for 1,000 men. On the 17th the weather changed and about a week of cool weather followed.

This delayed the harvest from a week to 10 days, and we had a surplus of from 100 to 300 men all the rest of the month."

### THE RESPONSE

Pastor and county agent immediately began earnest co-operation. They presented the case to the mayor of Larned and the Business Men's and Farmers' Organizations and to the churches.

The condition of large groups of homeless strangers standing idle in any town, depressed by a hostile environment, irritated because they are not hired immediately upon their arrival, is not at any time enviable. Their influence upon the town is not good because such conditions are not likely to bring out the best that is in them. The influence of the town or the community upon them is equally negative, because the town in self-protection will have raised a protective barrier between its best classes and its stranded, unhappy guests. Despite its economic aspects the situation really should rest upon a basis of broad humanity, such as concerns a church.

The town of Larned appointed a committee, and soon had the county agent's office furnished as a welfare room for the harvest hands, with a telephone, an attendant, tables, chairs, stationery, games and reading matter. The services of a county nurse were included. The expenses were underwritten by the business organizations, and the town council contributed $22.50 for an attendant.

Since the hotels and rooming houses of Larned were taxed to the utmost by those of the harvest hands fortunate enough to possess funds to bridge the idle interval, this room at night became a dormitory for those who were not prepared for the emergency. When the rush was over the janitor removed from the room over six hundred pounds of waste paper, which consisted of reading matter collected for the men, and which had later been used by them as bedding.

Pastor Mawdsley spent all the time he could spare arranging programs and conducting meetings in which one or more of his rural churches took part. The home ties of the men were renewed. They were persuaded to write to

their friends and relatives on special stationery that drew attention to Larned in many a far-away home whose bread came from this Kansas circuit. Many men were obliged to wait more than a week for employment. Those who were penniless were given an opportunity by the town to work for their board.

Pastor Mawdsley set the precedent of bringing the home and church life of Larned to the harvest workers. Musical numbers and concerts, with singing by the workers, were rendered by a group of young people from Larned and its circuit. For many of these entertainments the harvest workers furnished talent. This policy drew the following note of thanks from one of the men:

"We certainly appreciate the kindness shown us by the young ladies to come and entertain a bunch of strangers and rough-necks as they did Tuesday night. I have tramped from coast to coast, but have never been in a community where they treat harvest hands as they do in Larned, Kansas. They sure try to make one feel at home.

"I want to especially thank Miss Pierce for the splendid reading she rendered, and the other young lady whose name I don't remember. I have never been in a town in harvest where they furnish you books, games and music. Larned, Kansas, is on the top round of the ladder when it comes to welcoming harvest hands.

"I don't want to forget to thank the county agent, Mr. Schnacke, and his associates in the office for their kindness."

As this harvest hand testifies, the rural employer generally regards the migrant worker as a worthless member of society, to be used only to meet the harvest needs and then cast out as soon as possible. This also is the attitude of the employer's family toward the migrant. Mr. Mawdsley, as a field hand, had learned this by experience. What was done by Larned to lessen the migrant's trials and discomforts was excellent, and an example for other towns in the wheat belt.

The social as well as the religious atmosphere of harvest communities is too often hostile to the "foreigner" and his

ONE OF THE FOUR CHURCHES ON THE LARNED CIRCUIT

A DISPLAY OF GARDEN PRODUCE AT THE BOOTH FESTIVAL

tired soul. Mr. Mawdsley insisted upon the development of a community feeling that should make the harvester feel as if he were among his own folk and friends, a guest in the sort of home and church that he had left behind on the long trail of his economic Odyssey. Larned and its circuit began to treat the once hated "grasshopper" as a temporary neighbor and co-worker; above all, as a Christian.

One of the homely customs in the four churches of the Larned circuit during the hot summer weather is for the pastor to enter his pulpit in shirt sleeves and preach to a coatless congregation. When Pastor Mawdsley invited the harvest hands to come to his four churches, he cordially reminded them that Larned was more interested in the man than in the clothes he wore. "Come just as you are!" was the urgent request. On Sunday afternoons he took representatives of his four congregations to the welfare room in the Larned Court House and conducted services.

During the three harvest-Sundays of Mr. Mawdsley's first year there were three hundred and sixteen men present at the six religious services; during the second harvest-year there were three hundred and thirty-five, and during the last year, when the harvester-welfare work was established, there were four hundred and eighteen present at the services. Meanwhile, those laborers on the surrounding farms of the circuit were not neglected. Farmers arranged to drive the harvesters to church, and Mr. Mawdsley sent the men post-cards with the circuit church program. Many a harvest hand who had not entered a church since boyhood, who had learned, during his rough wanderer's life, to suspect the church as the source of all that discriminated against him socially, renewed his church ties.

It is small wonder that Larned gave up its custom of keeping open its stores on Sunday for the harvest hands. The monotony of a holiday, a Sabbath or a day of bad weather, has been banished in Larned. Those who went to town to loaf found instead a place to rest, to write letters home, to read and spend their time profitably until the evening service in which they chose and sang their favorite hymns. Or the farmers took Mr. Mawdsley's text

of sociability and entertained their help in their own homes; or joined with neighbors in a picnic or a joint church-going party.

### GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE

So successful was the work, so cordial the response of the men, that Mr. Mawdsley has been sent to no fewer than seventy other communities to tell the story and encourage similar work; for he has found the solution of a problem that has ever burdened the church and church leaders. There have been pastors who closed their churches during the wheat harvest and left on vacations when the migrant came to town. The Methodist circuit at Larned, Kansas, has taught a better way; and has made the Gospel a more vital and living thing both to the strangers temporarily there and to the permanent residents to whom these strangers bring prosperity.

# Chapter VI

## THE LARGER PARISH

### COLLBRAN AND MONTROSE, COLORADO

*The story of the old circuit system with twentieth century emendations, in which the church at the center is not content to stay there.*

A decade ago the neglected fields survey of the Home Missions Council showed that hundreds of people in the valleys of the western slope of the Rockies were living with little or no opportunity to attend a church service or a Sunday school. There were countless communities where the church-going habit was extinct; there were schoolhouses which could be developed into live community centers with help from the outside. There were two churches in Colorado, one at Montrose, a town of 3,500, and the other at Collbran, a village of 300, which found themselves surrounded by conditions such as these. Out of them grew a vision of larger service which has changed the lives of these churches, and with the aid of their denominational boards they have gone far toward the solution of their particular problems and toward serving as models inspiring to others.

Montrose and Collbran are situated on the western slope of Colorado, a part of the country where all is bristling with new life. Within an area of 104,000 square miles, the segment of the Rockies lying within the state boasts of 155 mountain peaks, each more than 1,200 feet above the arc of the sea. A series of deep valleys, once lake basins, lies encircled by ranges of mountains. Within these valleys are rolling mesas and fertile stretches, and in two such

valleys, Uncompaghre and Plateau, lie Montrose and Collbran.

In 1858 prospectors began to trickle into these hard-locked highlands in search of gold, driving the red men of the Ute tribe, who generations ago made this their home, to a wilderness farther on. "Lured by the mystery of the West and challenged alike by its wilderness and its possibilities," homesteaders from Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and the Atlantic states, as well as families burned out in the prairie fires of Kansas straggled in. Conditions changed fast in the new West. Soon the whistle of an engine sounded in the region of Montrose, which to the pioneers who were fighting sagebrush, the desert and solitude, meant civilization and a future market for crops and cattle.

Montrose and Collbran are separated by the Grand Mesa, known as the Mesa of a Hundred Lakes, which forms the horizon line for miles. In spite of this situation the settlement of Collbran, at the foot of the western slope of Grand Mesa, and that of Montrose, in the valley at the foot of the eastern slope, up to a certain period developed along identical lines. It was, as will be seen, a topographical division that brought the railroad to one town and increased the isolation of the other. They were formed about the same time by the same type of settlers. They enjoy the same physical and natural advantages, and up to a certain period they developed the same problems. These homesteaders from the East found rich black loam for their crops and pastures for their cattle, but it was hard, pioneer life. Long hours and seven days a week were needed to clear away the sagebrush and provide the means of existence. The church-going habit that many of these pioneers should have inherited from their fathers was lost. Their god was work. But now the battle has been won. The desert is reclaimed; the valleys are rich with fruit, alfalfa and potatoes; on the mountains and mesas graze herds of fine cattle, and in the heart of these mountains are stores of gold, radium and coal. The first settlers went into Colorado for gold, but to-day the annual output of the state's

irrigated farms is more than ten times as great as that of its gold mines.

### COLLBRAN

Collbran, the geographic center of Plateau Valley, nestles in the great horseshoe bend of Battlement Mesa Forest, six thousand feet above the sea, on the western slope of Grand Mesa. The village itself is flat and uninteresting: "it just growed," and its appearance is typical of its growth. A man named George Hall staked the first claim and built a store near the creek which now runs through the town. Englehart and Parkinson in their turn built a store with a hall over it. A blacksmith named Gillum settled near the creek. Later a schoolhouse was built, a hotel, a post-office and in recent years the church, the bank, an auditorium, a community house and now a union high school. Except by stage, Collbran is unconnected with the outside world. DeBeque, the nearest railroad station, is twenty-five miles away, and Grand Junction, the distributing center of that section, is forty-five miles distant and reached only by a winding canyon road. Protected, with no competition and no exposure to outside influences, Collbran developed into a static community, non-churchgoing and non-social.

Life in Plateau Valley, however, is picturesque, American and exclusively rural. Men prefer horses to automobiles and still wear the big-four Stetson and the red bandanna. Of the three thousand inhabitants, Joe Jim and his wife, Ute Indians, are the only reminders of the earlier civilization. Of these three thousand people, 95 per cent. of whom are American born, twenty-two hundred live on ranches or farms; fewer than six hundred live in the villages of Collbran, Mesa, Plateau City and Molina; the others live in small communities called Basins.

The church had little influence in the development of the valley in pioneer days, and up to two years ago found itself making not even a dent in the every-day life of the valley. It had trained no leaders; it had no way of proving its practical and spiritual worth in the community.

MONTROSE

From the time the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad crosses Marshall Pass and crawls slowly down the mountains in great horseshoe curves to Montrose, distant peaks and canyons are pointed out to the traveler. There is Ouray, the Switzerland of America and the beauty spot of the San Juan mountains. To the south and west are Verde National Park and the Cliff Dwellers' Ruins, and westward, just outside of Montrose, is the Gunnison Tunnel, the largest irrigation tunnel in the world. As in Collbran, the Grand Mesa is a striking feature of the horizon. As the train pulls into the station at Montrose, modern and attractive, with its wide concrete street and its ornamental lighting stretching through the center of the town, it is difficult to realize that it was only in 1883 that "the whistle of the first engine" was heard in this region. With the railroad came exposure to outside influences and contacts. It was followed by a continual influx of new settlers that has resulted in a population of thirty-five hundred as compared with Collbran's three hundred. It made Montrose accessible for three hundred foreigners, while Collbran drew none.

With this influx came people of varying desires and ambitions, out of whose presence grew the over-organization of the town socially and religiously. The church at this time, instead of being a socializing force, had become unsocial and parochial in its outlook. It reflected the selfish aims of its small congregations and stood in the way of coöperation.

Grand Mesa, great divide that it is, gives to one town all the opportunities of intercourse and contact with a progressive world and shuts away another from all these advantages.

Yet social and religious conditions in both were practically identical, lacking leadership and coöperation. Both started in the same way, settled by people in search of a new home, developed by people who found that home worth having. Collbran and Montrose were founded and de-

veloped together. Collbran stood still while Montrose grew, but in growing Montrose became merely a collection of Collbrans.

To these two churches, one static, making no inroad upon the life of the community and the other limited in its outlook, came the vision of something new and of greater service—the vision of serving, in addition to their immediate communities, the people in the outlying communities, in religious, educational, social and recreational lines; the vision of a larger parish.

### THE PLAN

The larger parish plan as it is to-day is a plan which "specializes in a ministry over areas as well as churches." It is a plan by which a church at the center of a wide area with a scattered population can serve that population by sharing with it the advantages of its equipment and its personnel.

The program is determined by the needs of the community. It is, therefore, elastic and may be applied successfully with equal value to varied situations. But the objectives of the plan and its basic methods are everywhere similar. It calls for the centering of the work of the area at one point, from which the work is extended throughout the territory. It calls for more than one worker. Formerly several ministers lived at the center from which they went out to the churches on their circuit. Preaching was the beginning and end of their program. Under the larger parish plan, instead of these several ministers of different denominations giving intermittent attention to their churches, there are several workers of one denomination integrated in one staff carrying a social and individual ministry throughout the entire area. What this ministry shall be, especially on its social side, depends on the community, the local leadership, the general religious situation. In a well-developed community, with an excellently equipped consolidated high school, with a social vision, the program is different from the program in a place where there is

nothing or next to nothing save the church. But always the ideal is to serve the whole area and all within it, to meet all unmet religious and socio-religious needs.

A larger parish plan demands from the community interest, a willingness to coöperate, and financial support. It is a plan that takes years to prove—"an ideal to be worked toward rather than to be fully attained." As the years roll on it becomes ever more clear that people of all faiths can coöperate and that the plan is demonstrating what can be done in a selected parish with adequate equipment, personnel and finance.

This chapter, then, tells the story of the application of this flexible plan to two different communities. It shows that things quite often attempted only in more closely knit and densely populated localities can be applied to whole areas when there is the proper integration of staff and the proper coöperation on the part of the people.

### THE PLAN IN PRACTICE

When this larger parish plan came to these two parishes separated by Grand Mesa, at the request of the people themselves through the proper channels of the Congregational Church and its Home Mission Board, it brought solutions peculiar to the needs of each. Collbran, isolated from the world, had the problem of setting its rusty wheels to work and following up and expanding the work started by its early leaders. Montrose, on the other side of Grand Mesa, had a more elaborate set of problems. Because of its exposure to the outside world it had acquired all the ills of over-churching due to over-socializing forces. It had to enlist new interest in conditions outside of the boundary of the town; it had to create a spirit of coöperation between town and country. The larger parish plan was able to solve these two separate or dissimilar sets of problems.

Collbran and Montrose people as the larger vision and plan developed became interested not only in the plan but in their part in carrying out of the plan. They began to say "only the best is good enough for us"—the best in equip-

THE RODEO—THE EVENT OF THE YEAR AT COLLBRAN

PICNIC OF THE PLEASANT VIEW SUNDAY SCHOOL, COLLBRAN

ment and in personnel. If the early leaders who had gradually widened the scope of their ministry by conducting preaching services and Sunday school in surrounding communities had been supported by this enthusiasm, they need not have gone alone Sunday after Sunday, but could have been accompanied by laymen filled with a desire to carry this extended ministry still farther.

That this is true was soon proven, for the little church was no longer adequate for Collbran's needs. It was a one-room, one-day-a-week church, with no equipment for work outside of the village.

Montrose was planning a new building, and to the plans were added a gymnasium and clubrooms for community service. The church was able to undertake this building project alone, but received aid from the Congregational Home Mission Society for an extension secretary and equipment. Collbran needed aid for both a building and equipment, and this was given after a survey had been made. Collbran people contributed in cash, paint, work and keen interest.

The community house, which is attached to Collbran church, includes a library for the use of all, a boy's clubroom, a men's clubroom, an office, a gymnasium to be used also as an auditorium, two shower-rooms, a bowling-alley, a dining-room and kitchen.

More than one worker is essential to a large parish, for Plateau Valley, the larger of the two, embraces one hundred and fifty square miles, and both parishes are in a country where distances are great and communities isolated. The Montrose staff consists of a minister, in charge of the Congregational Church at the center, a full time business secretary, a gymnasium director and an extension secretary. In Collbran there are two ministers, one in charge of the church at the center and one the director of the larger parish.

These workers are aided by four cars, in Collbran, a Reo Speed Wagon and two Fords, and in Montrose a Ford built to carry a Delco Motor and a portable picture machine.

In the division of the work in these parishes the ministers at the centers have full charge of the Congregational

churches there. In Collbran the director of the larger parish has charge of all the extension activities. His headquarters are at the community house and of this house he has full charge—its upkeep, its program, the financing of the larger parish and the holding of religious and socio-religious services at the extension points. It is a ministerial partnership.

In Montrose the minister at the center has charge not only of the Montrose church but has general supervision of the extension work, which he and the extension secretary carry out together.

With this equipment was begun the task of ministering over areas as well as churches, of serving all the people and all their interests.

### QUICKENING INTEREST

In all of Plateau Valley and the outlying districts of Montrose, the early pioneers who had had the habit of church attendance had lost it. The new generation never formed it, but the people in these valleys are friendly, and interest and better attendance are coming as the church proves itself. The program of the larger parish, as broad as the valley, is overcoming the accumulated indifference of years.

In Collbran the Congregational church, before the new program was in operation, had twenty-five members. Today, two years after the inauguration of the program, the roll tells a different story—one hundred and three members, eighty-nine of them resident, a net gain of thirty-one in 1921.

The spirit of the community has already changed. In earlier days if a man went to church he was laughed at by other men. But when thirty-two men were needed to solicit funds for the program in 1922 not one man refused. On one team were a Roman Catholic and an ex-Methodist minister, and one man, not a church member, declared that "it was no longer embarrasing to canvass for the church in Plateau Valley." It was an every-family canvass, seeking community support rather than support from church mem-

bers only, and 50 per cent. of the total subscription for 1922 was from non-members.

In Montrose, the community service ideal has interested a group of followers almost as large as the church membership, who support the program financially and in personal effort. This group, with the church members, control four-fifths of the financial support of the town; they are represented by three out of four on the school board, by a large majority in the Chamber of Commerce and in the Rotary Club by all but five out of a membership of thirty-three.

In 1921, the net gain in church membership was forty-nine, making a total of three hundred and twenty-two, and of the two hundred and forty pledges secured on the every-member canvass, one hundred and twenty, equaling 43.25 per cent. of the total subscriptions, were made by non-members.

### THE CHURCH PROGRAMS

Both churches have programs in which each group has a part. On Sunday each has a morning and evening service, and in each case the evening service is the more popular. In Collbran it is of interest to the entire community, as for instance, an illustrated lecture on "The Passion Play," and in Montrose usually a moving-picture with a short address, interesting to both old and young. The programs of two Sundays evenings will illustrate. Both opened with congregational singing, followed in one by a Farm Bureau picture showing the advantages of consulting a trained man. Between Parts 1 and 2 of the picture was a short address. The pictures used at these services are not always religious, but have good moral and educational values. The second service was quite different. The program opened with a fifteen-minute organ recital, followed by congregational singing and practical questions and demonstrations for the benefit of the young people in the front row.

In Collbran a Children's Church is held each Sunday between the Sunday school and the morning worship, and

in both churches the Sunday school is active, well-equipped with both rooms and materials. The Vacation Bible School supplements the Sunday school work in Collbran. Here, too, the Christian Endeavor is particularly active, drawing young people from all parts of the parish. These young people have done especially good work in conducting religious meetings at outlying points, thereby extending the larger parish activities and in arranging a course on vocational guidance. The doctor, the nurse, the banker and the lawyer each gave a lecture on their profession to help these young people decide upon their secular pursuits, while the church, in giving them charge of a Western Slope Conference, entertained at Collbran, gave them a taste of religious leadership.

Socially the week at the Collbran community house is full. The Scout Troop has its regular meeting in the boys' room, which is also headquarters for a young men's Bible class. The troop is well led and is making a place for the boys in the community. The biggest event of last year was the Junior Rodeo, a small edition of the biggest event of Plateau Valley. It was thus described in the Plateau *Voice:* "It came and went in a blaze of glory and the junior cowboy talent of Collbran and vicinity has done their 'dads' proud." A radio-phone outfit has been ordered, and news and stock bulletins will be issued daily.

The men's club meets every week during the summer and every other week in the winter for chess, checkers, pool and billiards, and a special feature such as a movie or a talk from a man from outside. The central purpose of the club is social, with the "good of the church" as one of its recognized aims. Men from all parts of the valley attend—men of all creeds and of none.

An anti-fat class for ladies meets three times a week in the assembly room, members following exercises to music. Every Friday a feature moving-picture is shown in the same room. The Ladies' Aids in both places are interested in the usual activities of Aids and are the home-makers of the churches. In Montrose the organization is called the Women's Union and includes all women interested, non-

members or members. The membership is divided into nine parts called circles, the chairman of which, with the officers, constitute the Executive Board. There are two meetings a month, one a missionary meeting in charge of the Missionary Committee, the other social.

A daily program of the activities of the Collbran community house shows how truly it is a community center:

| | |
|---|---|
| Morning: | Office hours of pastor and extension director<br>Club room and women's rest room open |
| Afternoon: | Women's rest room open<br>Men's club room open<br>Billiard room open, 1 to 5.30<br>Reading room open, 1 to 5.30<br>Library open for drawing books, 3.30 to 5<br>Assembly room always available |
| Evening: | Men's and women's rooms open<br>Reading room open, 7 to 9<br>Billiard room open, 7 to 9 |

*Schedule of Meetings*

| | |
|---|---|
| Monday: | Teachers' Training Class, 7.30 |
| Tuesday: | Scouts, 7.30 |
| Wednesday: | Fortnightly-afternoon-Ladies' Aid<br>Christian Endeavor, 7.30<br>Men's Club, 8.00 |
| Thursday: | Choir practice, 7.30 |
| Friday: | Community night entertainment |
| Saturday: | Camp Fire Girls, 2 P.M. |
| Sunday: | Sunday school<br>Children's church<br>Worship nursery<br>Morning worship<br>Evening worship |

In Montrose the activities of the gymnasium take a big place in the program. It is accessible to every one in the larger parish and to the young people in Montrose. No charge is made, the only qualification being regular attendance in their respective schools. The physical director is in charge and has on an average twenty classes a week. Competitive athletics have been organized between classes of the Sunday school and other Sunday schools of the town.

### WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Both churches fit as a whole into community programs. Agriculture is promoted through the Extension Department which aids the county agent in his drive for Farm Bureau memberships; education is fostered by the coöperation of the churches in securing Chautauquas, lectures and musical features; in Montrose a program of relief is carried out through a Young Women's Bible Class at the County Home.

The Collbran church regards itself as a part of the World Kingdom and supports missionary representatives in the foreign field. The work of the Rev. and Mrs. Leonard Christian, in Foochow, China, is supported by contributions from the parish. Collbran also has a personal interest in home work through Mr. Fred White, in Florence, Ala.

At home the Red Cross drive for Plateau Valley was conducted by the church. Church leaders were instrumental in securing the Chautauqua; they were interested in clean-up week and children's week. They work coöperatively with the Farm Bureau and plan next year to operate a labor exchange in haying time, and to furnish hot lunches for those school children who come long distances. A community park with playground for little children, a tennis court for adults, and a meeting ground for outdoor services are being prepared. These improvements have come about as a direct result of the interest of Collbran's leaders in the larger parish program. These people had been thinking and planning on a large scale for years in terms of steers and irrigation; now they are also thinking on the same scale of

the church and the well-being of their community. From this center the director of the larger parish plan sets out to transplant the new interest and enthusiasm to eight isolated basins and valleys in the hope that history will repeat itself on a smaller scale in each community.

One of the most significant events in the history of the larger parish was the surrender of the work at Plateau City by the Methodist Episcopal Conference at the inauguration of the larger parish program. A Congregational church was organized with the full consent and approval of both the District Superintendent and the local congregation. The extension director is minister of this church. It is an independent church with a preaching service and an organized Sunday school of its own, but nevertheless a part of the larger parish in interest and in its financial support.

### EXTENSION WORK

In addition to the work at Collbran and Plateau City, the extension director preaches fortnightly at two places, conducts organized Sunday schools at three others, and has organized a Christian Endeavor. In several of the basin day schools he is carrying out successfully a week-day religious program, giving also instructions in physical training and public school music, distributing library books, using visual instruction through the use of Perry prints and occasionally taking his portable Acme and showing educational films. The latest plan for extension work includes the ordination of "lay preachers" with the adoption of the slogan "one service in every schoolhouse each month."

The ministers in larger parish work have need of all their enthusiasm and faith. The events of a not very exceptional day in the life of the director of the larger parish illustrates this: "He began the day (a Sunday) preparing the Collbran church and community house for services, Sunday school, worship nursery; at ten-thirty he drove to Plateau City to conduct morning service and Sunday school. At two o'clock he changed from janitor and preacher to an assistant undertaker, bringing a casket to a funeral service and to the

cemetery. At three-thirty he held a Sunday school at Pleasant View. At seven-thirty he became a chorister, helping with the music of the evening service. During the worship, a man came in to say that an old man had been seriously hurt when some horses ran away. The truck became an ambulance and carried the dying man to the nearest hospital in Grand Junction, forty-five miles away."

Into five neighborhoods the minister of the Montrose church, with the extension secretary, has gone with preaching services, Sunday school or community programs, and in some cases with all three. A characteristic community program on the subject, say, of "Better Roads," would run somewhat as follows: "Community singing; three five-minute talks on 'How to Improve the Roads in Our Community'; one-reel movie, entitled 'Gravel-Road Construction'; one-reel movie, 'Jack and the Beanstalk.'" At other times the program may be purely social, with the man from the center acting as social engineer.

### ELASTICITY THE KEYNOTE

To some friends the larger parish director wrote: "If success is measured by the distance traveled rather than the point attained, then this work has been abundantly successful. It would have been difficult to find a spot where organized religion was of so little concern to the people in general as in this valley three years ago."

One of the values of the larger parish plan, as has been pointed out, is the elasticity of its program in meeting the needs at hand; its adaptability to competitive and non-competitive situations. The Plateau Valley larger parish has a clear field with no conflicting social or religious forces. But the plan at Montrose has a competitive field shared by many denominations and agencies, and is trying to shoulder its responsibility in the solving of a general problem of developing spirit, increasing efficiency and stimulating ideals within the outlying communities.

Such is the new type of ministry attempted by this twentieth century version of the old-time circuit—a ministry

which serves an entire area, not simply parishioners within it; which has substituted the auto for the horse and saddle-bags; which is meeting men on the level where they live and work, and which is gradually supplanting a weak and inconclusive program with a virile and comprehensive Christianity that compels the attention of townsman and cowboy alike.

# Chapter VII

## AN INDIAN EXAMPLE

## THE PIMA MISSION AT SACATON, ARIZONA

*A church that has made itself the focal point of an Indian tribe.*

A church which has entered into the whole life of its people is the Presbyterian, at work among the Pima Indians in Arizona, centering at Sacaton. The leaders of this work, both Indian and white, have, in fifty years, led a whole tribe from semi-barbarism into a Christian community. The results show the aptitude of the Indians for Christian civilization, if Christian ideas and ideals are presented in the right way. The field takes in four hundred and six square miles, all of the Gila River and part of the Papago reservations. The mission has grown until it now includes nine churches and stations scattered over this area. The white missionary in charge has nine full-time Indian helpers and one part-time man.

### A BOLD PIONEER

The beginnings of this enterprise were a far cry indeed from the mission as it is to-day, with its more than thirteen hundred members. Fifty-three years ago young Charles H. Cook started the work on his own responsibility. The mission boards had no money for such an enterprise, for Indian affairs in Arizona were at that time in a very unsettled state. The Government at Washington warned him that it would be dangerous to go. But Cook went, working his way out and preaching whenever opportunity offered. He arrived at the Agency on December 23, 1870, with two dollars in his pocket. On January 1st, he was on the pay-roll of the

Government as a teacher with a salary of $1,000 and all expenses paid, a good income for those days.

From that time until he was an old man, Cook worked with the Pimas. During the earlier years he could do his mission work only on Sundays and at night, for he had to earn his living on week-days. It was after he had been working on the reservation about eight years that the Presbyterian Board undertook his support so that he was able to devote all his time to the mission work. At first he talked and preached out in the fields, because it was there that he found the Indians. Sometimes he would talk in the little round dwelling-places called "kihs," where one must stoop to enter and sit with lowered head because of the smoke. Sometimes he preached in the village counsel-houses, and if the people were friendly, the village captain or sub-chief would call them together for the meeting. His addresses were always interpreted during the first years, but he studied the language and worked out for himself a dictionary of Pima words, so that before long the Indians could understand him. He taught much and he won the children at first by giving them cubes of sugar and pieces of bread. "That's the way he catch 'em," said an old Indian. As soon as the children learned English, they could interpret for him.

Cook's courage and patience were proof against all discouragement. It was twelve years before he made his first convert and *nineteen* years before his first church was organized. The work grew by the conversion of one Indian here, another there, then a whole family, then several families. The next step would be the organization of a church. So it went. The first church was organized at Sacaton on April 3, 1889. The Gila Crossing Church was organized in 1894, the Blackwater in 1900, and the two other churches, Casa Blanca and Maricopa, were organized in 1902.

Cook ministered to the whole man. He taught the Pimas the simple story of Christ, and he also taught them better ways of living; he worked to protect their water rights just as faithfully as he preached the Ten Commandments. The

Pimas grew to love and trust this earnest white man, and gradually began to take all their problems to him and to put his words into practice. As a result of his wise dealings with these people the church to-day is so woven into their lives that one cannot mark the place where its influence begins or where it leaves off.

### THE INDIANS' LAND—AND WATER

The land of the Pimas is sandy desert country, fertile, indeed, with water, but absolutely unproductive without it. The water question has been a burning one for years, for the Indians are dependent for their living upon the land. From prehistoric times they have understood the practice of irrigation, the Gila River affording plenty of water for their needs. But as the white men settled in the valley far above, they gradually diverted the water to their own use. In the days when the Apache was on the war path, the Pimas helped to protect the white man, but when those dangerous days were over the white man expressed his gratitude by taking the Indians' water. Some wells were put in which provided water for part but not all of the reservation. Many of the Indians have had one crop failure after another, year after year. Is it any wonder that the Indian says: "When the white man begins, he takes all"? Charles H. Cook, however, was one white man who never let the Government or the public forget the injustices done to the Pimas. It is safe to say that had not this guardian of their interests been at hand to checkmate these efforts to despoil the Pimas of their heritage, they would long ago have been objects of charity.

It was a long hard fight, but as a result of years of agitation, effective measures have at last been taken to secure adequate water for the Pimas. In 1921, a dam across the Gila River above Florence was completed and a smaller dam is now being constructed across the Gila River near Sacaton. These diversion dams will help, but the water question will not be finally settled until the Government builds a reservoir for the impounding of the flood waters.

This will be the San Carlos reservoir which has been considered for so many years. "Cook agitated the Pima's need and laid the foundation for the remedy of that need; the work that he did pointed the way to what was needed," said the present secretary of the Indian Rights Association.

Dr. Cook also fought to keep the Pimas' land for the Pimas, and his successor has carried on the struggle. Much of the 1,200,017 acres of the Gila River reservation is irrigable, valuable land, and because of the adaptability of this land to the growth of long staple cotton, the whites have coveted it. At one time there was a plan on foot to move all the Indians into one district and appropriate the best of their land. But through the efforts of Cook and other friends of the Pimas whose aid he enlisted, this plan was frustrated.

Another attempted injustice was prevented recently by Dr. Cook's successor, the present missionary, Dr. Lay. The Pimas first heard of a scheme to lease fifty thousand acres of their land in January, 1920. Under this lease the Indian was to be deprived of the use of his allotment, consisting of twenty acres for each member of the tribe, was to wait ten years before he received any "rental" under the terms of the original lease, and was to have no voice in saying whether the lease should be renewed. Dr. Lay called the Indians together from all over the reservation to talk about the lease. He told them how the Sioux had started leasing and now had very little land left, and pointed out that when the white man gets a good start on a reservation, he is likely to end up by taking the whole thing. The situation was fully discussed, and when the matter was finally put to a vote, only one Indian approved of the lease. The aid of the Indian Rights Association was enlisted, and as a result of these efforts the lease was cancelled in January, 1921.

### THE CHURCH AS MONEY-LENDER

"I want the Pimas to value their land," says Dr. Lay. "I do not want them to forget that many of their fathers and grandfathers died to keep the Apaches away." One of

the chief obstacles to the Indian's keeping his land elsewhere has been his lack of appreciation of the fact that an unpaid mortgage means the loss of his land. When the Indian receives his property, he is apt to get a mortgage on it and to spend the money without realizing that one day he must pay. To impress upon the Indian the idea that he must pay what he borrows, Dr. Lay has instituted a system of church loans. He started the Church Loan Fund as an experiment about six years ago, and it has been wholly successful, not a single Indian having failed to pay his indebtedness. The fund has now grown to $5,800, and eighty-three Indians have loans out at present. The largest amount loaned so far has been $5,000, which sixteen Indians at Blackwater borrowed to pay for a pumping plant and well to water two hundred acres.

A special cotton loan of $5,000, which could have been considerably increased if required, was made by the Goodyear Company during the cotton boom. The white traders on the reservation did not favor these loans, for they had themselves been marketing the cotton raised by the Indians and making a good profit. The conditions of the loan were ideal, and the Indian could sell when he got ready. The only thing specified was that he deliver to the Goodyear. Serving unofficially and without remuneration, Dr. Lay acted as the agent of the company, reporting the conditions and stand of the cotton. Collections have been poor on this loan, for the cotton crash came just as the cotton was ready to be marketed, but if the company could have taken all of the cotton and paid a fairly good price for it the loan would all have been paid promptly.

The First National Bank of Casa Grande has also started a loan fund for Indians. Fifteen hundred dollars was given for this purpose by people who, through Dr. Lay, had become interested in the problems of the Indian. The bank also set aside $2,500, so that a total fund of $4,000 is available. When an Indian on the reservation wants money, he goes to Dr. Lay and, if he is worthy of help, Dr. Lay gives him a note to the bank. Eighty Indians have loans out now, on which they pay 10 per cent. interest. "It is

not only helping them out temporarily, but it's teaching them to be good citizens," said the president of the bank. "As a result of these loans, twenty accounts have been started."

### SOCIAL HABITS

In other ways also Dr. Cook and his successor have served the temporal interests of the Pimas. With the Christian Indians as leaders, the recreational and social life of the Pimas has gradually been changed. Standards of family life, the marriage law and the position of women, ever a determining factor among Indians, are now those of the average white community. The church is the main influence in directing public opinion and the old Indian religion commands no followers.

Years ago, the first native policeman to attempt to enforce the laws against drinking on the reservation was one of Dr. Cook's earliest converts. At that time, the Indians used to make intoxicating wine in big jars called "ollos." On these occasions whole villages would get drunk, and often there would be fights. "We would see a man all covered with blood, his clothes all bloody," said an old Indian, adding reminiscently, "and once in a while a murder." Indian policemen, sent to break the "ollos" and stop the drinking would usually end by joining in the celebration. Finally, the agent appointed a new chief of police and put new men under him. The son of this chief of police tells what happened. "My father," he said, "had become interested in the story of Jesus before this; he had commenced to attend church and had been baptized. He went out with his men and they didn't get drunk like those others did. They smashed the 'ollos' with the wine in them. That was the beginning of stop make that stuff. My father was the first Indian policeman to enforce the law against the drinking in any village." The reservation is now a model of sobriety.

Recreations, too, have changed. Formerly the foot and horse races between villages were the excuse for heavy gambling. "The women," an old Indian declared, "would

even bet the skirts they were wearing." Recreational life now centers in the church and the Government schools. Villages compete in clean athletics, and the policy of the Mission includes a definite program of recreation. The Pima Athletic Association, which now has seventy members, was organized by Dr. Lay seven years ago. A football league is controlled by the Athletic Association. Dr. Lay, who coaches one football team and referees most of the games that are played, began from the first to work for a clean game and the reservation now has a reputation for clean play and for observing the rules. The rule against swearing on the field, for instance, overlooked in many football games, is scrupulously enforced in the games which the Pimas play.

As time has gone on, more and more responsibility in the various organizations of the Presbyterian Mission has been accorded to the Indians. Often the outstanding weakness of a work of this kind is that everything is managed for the Indian, he himself contributing nothing. Here, on the other hand, the management of affairs has been gradually turned over to the members, until at present they take as much responsibility as do the members of the average white church. When, for instance, the site of the new Sacaton Church was chosen, Dr. Lay would have liked it to have stood on the site of the old church, but the building committee, after a protracted discussion, decided on a different location, and that settled the matter. "It would have been easy for me to get what I wanted," said Dr. Lay, "but it wouldn't have been serving the Indian."

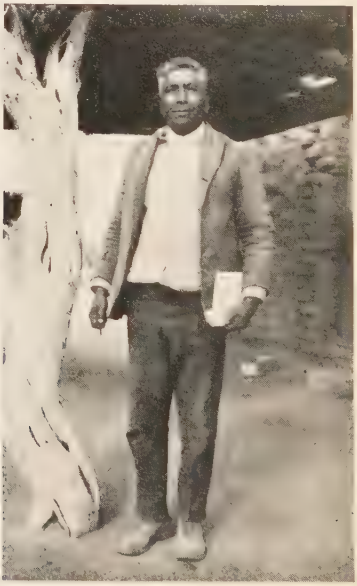
### THE MEMORIAL CHURCH

This Sacaton Church, which was built in 1918 as a memorial to Dr. Cook, is the central and largest church building. The Indians and their white friends all worked together to raise the funds and obtained $17,000 of the $25,000 needed. The building committee then appointed the church treasurer and Dr. Lay to ask a bank in Casa

THE PRIMARY CLASS OF THE CASA BLANCA CHURCH IN THE SACATON FIELD

IF THE HOUSE OF A WIDOW FALLS INTO BAD REPAIR, HER FELLOW CHURCH MEMBERS FIX IT UP FOR HER

THE SACATON PIMA CHURCH BUILT AS A MEMORIAL TO DR. COOK



—AND ONE OF THE ELDERS

Blanca for the remaining $8,000 on loan, and the request was granted with no other security than "the face of an Indian." The building is of gray stucco. The church auditorium seats five hundred and the basement is divided into different classrooms and a kitchen, furnished with a stove and dishes and silver for one hundred people.

Eight other buildings are scattered over the mission field. Four are the homes of regular church organizations, one is a mission and the rest are small chapels located in parishes which are so large that it is more convenient to have two places of meeting. The chapels are used for Sunday evening meetings, prayer meetings, and Christian Endeavor meetings. The total value of these "outpost" buildings, which were all built by the people themselves, even to the adobes, is $8,000. Four have outdoor arbors where summer meetings are held. There are two manses, one at Sacaton and one at Gila Crossing, and there are also two houses for workers on that part of the Papago reservation which is included in this field.

### WORKING TOWARD SELF-SUPPORT

That the Indians are assuming more responsibility all the time is shown in the way the churches are growing toward self-support, and in this connection it should be borne in mind that because of the whites taking their water, many of these Indians are not as well off financially as they were thirty years ago. At present this is still a home mission field, a little more than $4,600 having been received in 1922-23 for the support of the work from the Presbyterian Board and from some outside contributors. There is little doubt, however, that when the Pimas all have water, the work will become entirely self-supporting. In 1922, the churches raised $432 for home missions, $38 for foreign missions, $120 for evangelism, $50 for other church causes and $126 for miscellaneous benevolences. In 1902, twenty years earlier, they raised only $138 for home missions, $14 for foreign missions and $29 for all other church and

benevolent causes. In 1922, $1,275 was raised for congregational expenses; in 1912, $450 was raised for this purpose, and in 1902 only $127.

Collections are taken up at all meetings. Each church uses the budget system and makes out its own budget. An every-member canvass is made every spring by the group leaders. The people promise to pay something, but they rarely pledge actual amounts because they cannot tell in advance about their crops. They give what they can.

Membership of the churches increases steadily. In 1902 the total membership was 896; in 1922 it had grown to 1,382. The present membership is distributed as follows among the five organized churches:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sacaton | 526 |
| Gila Crossing | 308 |
| Casa Blanca | 247 |
| Blackwater | 233 |
| Maricopa | 68 |

This represents a higher membership average than in any other group of Indian churches in the United States. The total number of members equals 22 per cent. of the total population.

Care is taken to keep track of every church member and a regular "ever-follow" system has been worked out. Each elder is supervisor of a district and watches over every church family in his district. When the weather begins to get cold, he sees that all of his families have enough wood. If a home is without wood and has not the money to buy any, he calls the men of the church together and they cut and haul wood for that family. Or, if the house of a widow or sick family is letting in the rain and cold, the men of the church take time to rebuild the house. Furthermore, in every village there are group leaders each of whom has a list of people for whose attendance at meetings he assumes responsibility. These group leaders come together once a month in the Religious Council, which was organized two years ago to discuss general policies, methods and plans.

Members have a real feeling of responsibility toward those who are not members of any church. "If one of our neighbors is not a member of any church we have to go to him and hold a little meeting at his house," said an elder, "then we just keep on going until he say he is glad to see us, until he wait for us to come back again. We talk to him about the Gospel and keep on coming again and again. Then when Communion is coming, I have to go to him and ask him how he feel now. I say, 'If you want, come to Communion.' He say, 'All right, I go.' Then I report to Dirk Lay who goes and sees him. Maybe the next Communion he join, or the next one after that."

### THE CAMP MEETING

The chief evangelistic effort is made at the yearly camp meeting, held in the large arbor at Casa Blanca. These camp meetings were started by Dr. Cook fifteen years ago and have been held every year since. They are now managed by the Indians themselves through the Elders' Association (which includes elders from all the Indian churches on the Gila River and Salt River reservations).

In order to obtain good speakers for the camp meetings, a kind of plan of exchange is worked, Dr. Lay speaking in some big city church and the church sending their minister out to the camp meeting. Two thousand Indians from all that section of the country came in wagons and on horseback to the last camp meeting, which started on Thursday evening, October 12th, and lasted through Sunday night. In the morning there were classes on methods in Sunday school work and Christian Endeavor. The general meetings came in the afternoon and evening. People were asked to come up and take a stand for Christ on all but the first day. If an Indian has not been living right during the year he feels called upon to take a stand at the camp meeting. On the last days there is always a big collection which amounted at the last meeting to $431.94. Expenses came to $289.56, and the balance was sent as a contribution to home missions.

### CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The first Sunday school was started by Dr. Lay in 1913 with three pupils; now every church member is enrolled in some one of the six Sunday schools. The total enrollment is 1,580. Years ago Dr. Cook started to teach the Bible to school children once a week. This work has grown until now regular catechism classes are held every Tuesday night at Sacaton in which all the Presbyterian school children in the Government boarding school are enrolled. Once a year the children in these classes are asked if they would like to join the church. At present one hundred and seventy-seven are enrolled in these classes, all but one of which are taught by Indian men members. After the class period is over, Dr. Lay conducts a training course for teachers and any one else who is interested.

The nine Christian Endeavor Societies—six senior, one intermediate and two junior—have a total enrollment of two hundred and forty-two. Regular meetings are held on Sunday morning or evening, and each society has socials through the year. The senior societies often go almost en masse to other villages to help organize Christian Endeavor Societies if there is none or to encourage a society already organized. Other organizations include an Old People's Society at Casa Blanca of twenty-five members; a Y. M. C. A. with twenty members at Blackwater, and women's missionary societies, with thirty-five members, at Sacaton and Blackwater.

The people have a social program in connection with their churches and chapels which they plan and carry out themselves. On special days there are open-air feasts in the different villages, to which every one in the village is invited. On Christmas Day, the feast is followed by an entertainment at which there is a tree and a Santa Claus to distribute the presents. On the Fourth of July, some one village entertains all the rest, and there are typical round-up sports.

To be at Sacaton and see the services through a Sunday convinces one that this church has somehow given the Indians a real vision of a living Christ. Church services at Sacaton come in the afternoon and the scene resembles

the grounds of a state fair with teams and riding horses fastened all along the fence about the church grounds.

The bugles sound from the school grounds directly in front of the church; the boys in one line, the girls in another, spick and span in their Sunday dress, march over two by two. In they come, children in front, men on one side, shawled women with their babies on the other, until the large auditorium is full. The choir, whose leader is the grandson of the old chief of the tribe, take their places in the choir loft. The service begins. Dr. Lay preaches in English, the Indian interpreter by his side translating the sermon sentence by sentence into Pima. The congregation exhibits intense earnestness and a deep interest in what is being said.

The number of mission workers this field has produced shows how the message has touched the hearts of the Pima Indians. Six have gone into the ministry in the last five years. In the last ten years, a total of eighteen have decided to dedicate their lives to Christ. All of the nine native assistants and the part-time worker came from this field. Three of these men are stationed on the Papago reservation. One of the mission workers tells of the instructions Dr. Cook gave to him when he started off to do his first preaching. "Take care of yourself," Dr. Cook told him. "You are like an open book in the eyes of your fellow men. People will come to hear you preach. They will read your every-day life and see whether you are trying to lead the kind of life you are talking about. They will read your conduct, your conversation and your actions. So I say, take care of yourself."

### THE WAY TO THE INDIAN'S HEART

The missionary in charge, Dr. Dirk Lay, has the absolute confidence of his people. "There are more than five hundred Indians here that Lay could take straight to hell with him if he wanted to," is the way one of his Pimas put it. He loves the Indians like brothers, and they love and trust him in return. "The elders and I have a perfect understanding,"

said Dr. Lay. "When I came I told them that I was going to treat them like white men and I wanted them to treat me like their own people. I told them that I wanted their respect; that I would not stay unless I had it. If I do something they don't like, they tell me about it and I do the same with them. You must have faith in your people or they will not have faith in you." The elders once told their white pastor they thought he was devoting too much of his time to athletics, to baseball especially. They talked the matter over pro and con and Lay explained to them carefully that in those places where church people did not go in for baseball there were often Sunday games. "You see, we go in for ball at Sacaton," he told them, "and we don't have Sunday ball." Since then he has never heard another word against athletics.

This mission has done what it set out to do. Dr. Cook realized that Indians, like white men, are reached not in masses or by wholesale legislation, but only as the mass is broken up and touched as individuals. "The first white man that gave us a chance to believe was Cook," said one of the elders; "then, when we old Indians learned Christian ways, we helped too. Together we worked, trying to do what is right, help others, pushing right on and going right ahead."

The Presbyterian Mission at Sacaton has shown the capabilities of the Indians for civilization and for Christianity. It has shown what can be accomplished by Christian men of large and humane views, following a Christian program. Part of this program has been the difficult task of trying to persuade the American people that the Pimas had rights which the white man was bound to respect. Largely as a result of the missionaries' efforts along this line, the outlook for enough water for all the Pimas is favorable, the Pima lands have been allotted and they have not been leased. On the reservation, white leaders and Indians together have worked out an adequate program for a rural people living in small villages scattered over a large area. It is a program which has reached the whole life of the Indian and centered it in the church.

# Chapter VIII

## THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

## GONZALES, TEXAS

*How two colored churches, by helping their people to help themselves, lifted two little cotton-field communities out of their ruts and raised them to the status of independent, progressive, self-respecting neighborhoods.*

From the road, Lone Oak and Monthalia appear very like hundreds of other little cotton-field neighborhoods of the great Lone Star State. The traveler speeding over the old Spanish Trail, the Middle Buster and other roads in Southwest Texas, continually passes country lanes that lead inevitably to these little scattered communities each with a name of its own, where groups of farmers are tilling the rich soil of the river valleys, raising their cotton crops and shipping their products to market.

The country around Lone Oak and about Monthalia is as level as a floor and the roads are lined on either side with purple thistles and wild sunflowers. Mocking birds sing in the great moss-hung trees by the Guadalupe River. The "lawn mower" frogs call out to remind you that this indeed is the "Sunny South." In the midst of a cotton, corn or sorghum field you catch a glimpse of a little cabin, the home of a Mexican tenant and his large family who all come out and look wonderingly after your car.

You travel through mesquite groves, through avenues of great post oaks with their trailing vines; you gaze off over miles of open spaces where the cotton fields and the horizon meet, over a country of sunshine, blue skies—of music. There is no hustle and bustle. Tractors go snailing up and down the rows of corn. Mule teams plod along the highways with loads of grain. Colored drivers, leaning comfortably back in their high seats, feet high on the dashboard,

sing as they go. If the price of cotton goes up—well and good; if it slumps, they sing just the same.

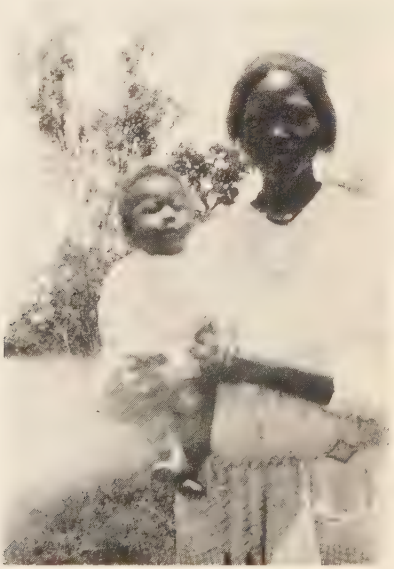
Lone Oak and Monthalia are both little cotton-field neighborhoods of Gonzales, the county seat and central trading point of the county of that name. The history of this region goes back to the earliest settlements of Texas, is linked with the story of the new-old city of San Antonio and the war of independence between Mexico and Texas.

The white residents of Gonzales are very proud of their history and their ancestry. They come from fine old Southern stock; conservative, aristocratic, successful and independent they are, as were their forebears, wealthy planters of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia, who once came to trade in cotton at Gonzales.

After the Civil War, when, for the second time, the population had been thinned out by war, many of the ex-slaves settled down in the open country where they had labored; and they and their families to-day make up virtually 75 per cent. of the population of communities like Lone Oak and Monthalia.

When the driver stops the car and announces: "This is Lone Oak," you wonder where even the tree is that gave it its name, for there are no traces of a community center, no buildings, no houses visible. Far back on the hill stands an old white meeting house and behind it a little cabin parsonage—and this is Lone Oak. You must go "cross lots," through the cotton fields, and in among the mesquite trees to find the homes of the four hundred people who live here. Three-fourths of them are colored and 60 per cent. of them are under twenty-one years of age. Some are old settlers of Civil War days and all are happy on the land. At least 70 per cent. of the white farmers own their land free of debt and few there are who are not boosters for Lone Oak. Their farms average sixty acres and the land is not for sale. The population of Monthalia is seven hundred and forty-three, nearly five hundred of whom are colored. Most of the farm *owners* here are thrifty Germans from the north who fortunately have been very lenient with their colored neighbors, have encouraged them to buy

THE PASTOR AND HIS CONGREGATION ENJOY AN AL FRESCO BANQUET



TWO PARISHIONERS OF MONTHALIA

land and allowed them to pay on time at low prices. If payments could not be made when due, these good folk have been patient and have allowed the purchasers to hold the land with the payment of interest alone; for the Germans understand what land ownership means to all people. So far, however, only one colored farmer in Monthalia owns his farm clear of debt, though a good number are working toward ownership. Many are very old and are related to one another. Debts have weighed them down ever since Civil War days. To pay the old debts they have become indebted to new creditors, or have paid in labor and have never been able absolutely to free themselves.

On these fertile lands along the Guadalupe River there are also groups of Bohemian, Polish, and Belgian farmers recently arrived who by their thrift and modern farm methods, learned in so very short a time, have also encouraged their colored neighbors to work toward independence.

### A DISHEARTENED PEOPLE

Home ties are strong in these neighborhoods. The main, and in fact the only, centers of activity are the churches; and herein lies a story of two colored religious organizations in the open country that have indeed learned the full meaning of the word spirituality and radically changed the life of Lone Oak and Monthalia. From a state of almost complete stagnation they have become vital forces in their communities and have fulfilled, in each case, not only the spiritual needs of the parish but have lifted the people to higher personal and community ideals and service.

Five years ago these two little colored churches stood impotent, lacking in leadership, poor, unequipped, battered and weatherbeaten. The former pastor of this circuit had left in the middle of the year, discouraged and downhearted. His people were indifferent; memberships were decreasing. There was no money and there was no method of raising it or of spending it. The church had no program nor societies for young people or old. Now and then a small group gathered for Sunday school but there were no regular services,

nor was there one to lead them if services had been held.

No one visited any one else. Each farmer and his family raised a little cotton and cotton only. Every cent the farmers made they spent on themselves for clothes and good times, frequently driving over to Gonzales, upon which city they were dependent for supplies. They had no confidence in themselves nor in one another. Suspicion and ignorance were everywhere in evidence. Ambition they had none. Life seemed to them no better than slavery; for, after all, they were bound by debt and still dependent on the white people on whose farms most of them worked as tenants.

Then came a new pastor to Lone Oak and Monthalia. The Reverend John L. Sullivan Edmondson, with his wife and small family, moved into the tiny cabin parsonage at Lone Oak on the hill back of the rickety little church; and things began to happen. Reverend John L. Sullivan Edmondson came straight from Gammon Seminary—a man with a clear young brain; a fearless fighter for the right; a believer in *work* and one who knew the meaning of it, for in order to pay his way through college and seminary he had cooked for the whole student body.

The first thing this pastor perceived was that his people were broken in spirit. He found there were few white people in the two communities included in his pastorate, that these few were friendly and unlike the white residents of Gonzales and larger towns where the colored folk were treated with indifference and contempt; and he concluded that here he could build up real self-respecting communities if only he could restore confidence in the people and help them to help themselves.

### WORKING TOWARD ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

To do this, he and Mrs. Edmondson adopted a program intended to minister to every need of every colored person in their parishes. "Until my people can become independent, that is—until they do not have to depend on some one else for their food and living," he said, "they cannot be helped. The whole trouble throughout the South comes

from the fact that although they are slaves no longer, my people have still been bound. They have borrowed money and have had to pay it back in labor." Seeing the Pole and the German, who had been there only a short time, making good and becoming independent, he set out to convince his people that they too might become independent. And he preached the gospel of "Raise what you eat and eat what you raise."

In order to encourage his parishioners to become their own masters, he purchased a ten acre farm at Lone Oak and a sixty acre farm at Monthalia and set certain days when all the men in the respective communities should work the land, with the promise that all who worked should share the harvest. Men became eager to buy their own homes. A large part of the Monthalia farm is, however, still pasture land. Formerly the landlords furnished no places for the tenants to keep horses and cows; hence many farmers were without cattle or means of conveyance. They lived too far from the church to walk to services and simply stayed at home. Now they have the use of the church pasture and have bought horses. Wood at one time cost so much to haul and was cut so far away from the colored sections that the colored folk usually went without it. Now they are cutting their wood from the church land. The purchase of the community farms marked the beginning of coöperation and team work for Monthalia and Lone Oak.

Diversification of crops was encouraged. Mr. Edmondson found one man planting only cotton year after year and making little money. This man lived in a one-room shack over in the hills. The preacher talked turkeys to him until he decided to raise a few. Gonzales is the greatest turkey market in the world and the man made $400 clear on turkeys the first year. The next year he raised more. He now lives in a modern, up-to-date bungalow across the road from his former cabin. He is independent. Though he still raises some cotton, his main income is from his turkeys.

This pastor knew that in other communities prizes were given for fine hogs, poultry, vegetables and gardens. To encourage better farming he organized clubs, a poultry club

of ten girls, and a garden club of ten girls, a corn club of eight and a pig club of six boys. All met regularly at the church to learn the best methods. They began to get acquainted and to enjoy getting together to talk things over. The boys and girls winning the first prizes for the best pig, garden, chickens, or corn are given free trips to the annual Conference at San Antonio. Every one believes that these prizes are worth trying for and is out to win.

### SETTING NEW STANDARDS

A regular clean-up week was introduced and is held each year. Prizes are offered for the best-kept homes and yards. The preacher has tried to improve the personal habits of the people. Through the church he is developing higher ideals, encouraging neatness and better personal appearance. When his parishioners go to town they are more and more particular to "clean up" and dress as they should. "Just any old thing" is no longer good enough. Home life has been enriched and a spirit of neighborliness is growing. Whole families turn out to services and visit one another.

In order to increase attendance at church, the pastor started house-to-house prayer meetings. The people then began to attend church regularly. Better housing conditions were encouraged. Sometimes nine persons were found living in a one-room cabin. There are no such cases now. Three new houses have been built recently and five have been enlarged and remodeled.

Mr. Edmondson came to the parish with the understanding that the board would soon find a city charge for him; but when the call from a city came in August, 1918, after he had been four months in Lone Oak and Monthalia, he refused it flatly, because these people needed him. With quick, hard work, this live-wire preacher has so rallied them that when the district Conference was held they had raised, in the four months, their whole annual quota for benevolences; something they had not accomplished in any twelve months before in the preceding thirty years. Mr. Edmondson saw what could be done if proper leadership were given and knew that his people had long been waiting for just the

sort of program he had set in motion. He and Mrs. Edmondson then proceeded with the work along other lines. They opened a day school in the Lone Oak church where any one who desired to study English, arithmetic, writing, or other subjects, might come. Men, women, and children eagerly attended these classes and many at Lone Oak can now read and write very well. The people were impressed with the value of education and public school attendance was increased.

Next a first aid headquarters was opened at the parsonage. Lessons were given; and during the "flu" period both Mr. and Mrs. Edmondson were community doctors and nurses. "Regular good Samaritans, they were," an old man said. Even now, in every case of sickness, some one goes running to the parsonage. All think the pastor ought to have every kind of medicine there is; and they have absolute faith in his remedies.

A community park was the next project. At the foot of the hill where no crops are planted there is a grove. Here picnics are held, sometimes lasting all day. The Monthalia people drive over and community events take place frequently; thus the two communities have been drawn closer together socially and in other ways as well.

One secret of the success of Mr. and Mrs. Edmondson lies in their genius for promoting friendliness. The first year they lived in the little Lone Oak cabin they found the people never visited one another. They bought an ice cream freezer; and with it packed, and in their buggy, they would start out to visit their people. Milk and cream could be had for the asking; so the pastor furnished the ice, and the people furnished the cream, for a social afternoon that could be enjoyed with no embarrassment and no timidity, with every one taking part in the "entertaining of the pastor and his wife," while refreshments were served de luxe.

### NOT FORGETTING THE KITCHEN

Going about the parish, the preacher seldom saw canned fruits and vegetables in the homes; and he found that those

who ate meat at all were having difficulty in keeping it fresh. He went away to summer school in 1920 and took special courses in canning, preserving, and meat-curing. Already he was an expert cook. When he returned from summer school he invited the women folk to the parsonage and showed them how to can fruits and vegetables, how to make jellies and to cure meats. Now their cupboards are well stocked. There are shelves upon shelves of berry preserves, canned fruits and vegetables, all labeled and waiting for "special occasions."

During all the while he was developing this many-sided social program, Mr. Edmondson was preaching straight from the shoulder. He was talking independence, the value of a bank account, better citizenship; he was urging upon the older men that it was up to them to make the new generation better than their own, up to them to make better provision for their children than had been made for themselves when they were young. He urged: "Don't sing, 'Where is my wandering boy to-night?' but 'Where is my wandering boy—and his father?'"

Mr. Edmondson had endeavored to feed his flock not only with the material food they were learning so well to raise, but with the spiritual food necessary for the building up of their moral, educational, social and economic life. Said he: "My people know that I can borrow money from a Gonzales bank just as well as any white man there—not so *much* as some, but as much as any white man of equal resources. And they know *why*. Because I always pay it back on time. I always pay my debts. Independence of livelihood and only that can set my people free." And this is the goal for which he is working—not for Lone Oak and Monthalia alone but for all his people everywhere.

### EQUIPMENT

Both the Lone Oak and Monthalia colored churches are still in dilapidated condition, are valued at only $300 and $400, and seat only two hundred and one hundred and twenty-five people respectively. The little cabin parsonage is valued at only $200. Ten acres of land at Lone Oak are

valued at $1,500 and the sixty acres at Monthalia at $3,500. Both churches are one-room buildings with only rickety chairs and benches and rude pulpits. Nearly every pane of glass is broken or entirely gone from the windows. A storm has undermined the Monthalia church and set it at a queer angle; but new equipment has been promised by the Centenary Fund and as soon as possible will be forthcoming. In the meantime the church program is in full swing despite the inadequate equipment.

### ON A SOUND BUSINESS BASIS

From no financial system at all to an A-1 budget system of raising funds these churches have proceeded during the last five years. Both use duplex envelopes. An every-member canvass is held annually. All money is raised by subscriptions of which there are one hundred and ten in Lone Oak and one hundred and eight in Monthalia, only fourteen in each place coming from non-members. About 10 per cent. of the total money pledged comes from non-members. The church then has set the example of proper handling of money.

The Lone Oak church has a small debt of $400 incurred in 1921 for purchase of land. Thirty-two dollars a year is being paid as interest, the money being raised by pledge. Monthalia owes on its land $2,000, which debt is being paid at the rate of $170 a year. The current expenses, itemized below, are met without a deficit.

| *Expenditures* | *Lone Oak* | | *Monthalia* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Salary | $300 | | $400 | |
| Benevolence | 105 | | 120 | |
| Local benevolence | | | 20 | |
| Repairs and interest | 186 | ($32 on land) | 190 | ($170 on land) |
| Other salaries | 56 | | 106 | |
| General maintenance | | | 50 | |
| Other expense | 50 | | 60 | |
| | $697 | | $946 | |

WORSHIP

Preaching services are held in Lone Oak every other Sunday morning and evening. Every Sunday afternoon there is either a meeting of the Epworth League or the Farmers' Improvement Society. Two midweek services, one a meeting of the teacher training class and one a regular prayer meeting, are regularly held.

At Monthalia preaching services are held every other Sunday morning and afternoon, and each week the church is open for prayer meeting.

The morning services at the two churches have an attendance of about one hundred and twenty-five each. At Lone Oak about eighty is the average attendance at evening services, while about one hundred attend the afternoon meetings in Monthalia. The percentage attending each church according to sex groups is as follows:

| | *Lone Oak* | | *Monthalia* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A.M. | P.M. | A.M. | P.M. |
| Men | 25 | 50 | 30 | 35 |
| Women | 40 | 40 | 50 | 40 |
| Young people | 20 | 10 | 10 | 15 |
| Children | 15 | x | 10 | 10 |

Attend one of the services on a sunny Sunday morning. As you approach the shabby little building it seems to you that every one in the community is heading for the church. Out through the cotton and corn fields come groups of women and girls dressed in their best spic and span organdies of every hue imaginable, their broad-brimmed shade hats trimmed with bright flowers. Down the road and through the lanes come people, old and young, afoot, on horseback and in buggies, and even in well-filled lumber wagons. In the churchyard under the trees, the horses are unharnessed and turned loose to keep cool and to graze during the service. Saddles are removed from the ponies and thrown over the limbs of the trees. The little old bell rings out its invitation to worship.

There is no organ prelude. There is no organ—nor is there need for one. Some one starts to sing, others join in. Soon all the congregation is assembled and the service begins. A chorus sings "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and other well-known and dearly loved spirituels like "I'm going down to de River Jordan one of these days," "Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart," "My Savior, my Lord, my Jesus is makin' up my dying bed." The preacher leads in the singing of "Steal away to Jesus." Beneath the orderly, reverent service runs always a rhythm. As the sermon leads up to its climax, many feet begin to patter, one sister weeps softly, another continues to say in a quiet chanting voice, "Well yes, well yes." There are occasional amens.

Then suddenly, as at the moment when a driver throws out the clutch and the car spins quietly off down the road, the preacher calmly finishes his sermon, mops the perspiration from his brow, and announces the singing of more songs. After this he says: "Now let's open the door for the Lord," and the collection is taken. After the benediction, when the people are dismissed, dinner is served on the lawn; and later another service is held despite the fact that the thermometer runs over one hundred in the shade. These folk care not for heat, in fact the hotter it is the better they sing.

Mr. Edmondson's sermons never beat around the bush. As he says, "My name isn't J. L. Sullivan for nothing." One main purpose runs through his work in this parish—to make his people aware that there are some rights in this country that are *theirs,* theirs though they may never exercise them; that when their boys and girls grow up and go out into the world they should be such as to cause people to say simply—"There goes a *man,* or there goes a *true woman.*" "We're black, yes," says this pastor, "but we can be *men* and *women.*" Better citizenship, better homes, better farms, better people—better conditions all along the line—these are what he is working for in Lone Oak and Monthalia.

### MEMBERSHIP

The total enrollment of the two churches is two hundred and thirty-eight, as follows:

| | *Lone Oak* | *Monthalia* |
|---|---|---|
| Males | 39 | 77 |
| Females | 46 | 76 |
| | 85 | 153 |
| Number under 21 | 35 | 73 |
| Number 21 to 46 | 27 | 58 |
| Number over 46 | 23 | 22 |

Forty-five per cent. of the total number are less than twenty-one years of age and it is to them that Mr. Edmondson has paid special attention in laying out his program.

Only twenty-six of the members joined the churches by letter, two hundred and twelve by confession of faith.

Twenty-eight per cent. of the colored population of Lone Oak and 26 per cent. of the colored population of Monthalia are church members.

The total gain last year was twenty-three and the total loss ten, leaving a net gain of thirteen members. Of the total gain only two were by letter and of the twenty-one joining by confession six were adult males, ten adult females, three boys and two girls.

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The membership of each of the two Sunday schools is still only half that of the church; but both are growing. Lone Oak Sunday school has five and Monthalia four classes, with memberships of forty-five and forty, respectively. All the members live on farms. The average attendance at both ranges from thirty-five to forty. According to classes they are divided as follows:

| | *Lone Oak* | | *Monthalia* | | *Total* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B. | G. | B. | G. | B. | G. |
| Beginners | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 11 |
| Primary | 5 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| Intermediate | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 9 |
| Senior | 5 | 9 | | | 5 | 9 |
| Adult Bible class | 5 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| | 21 | 24 | 16 | 24 | 37 | 48 |

Grand Total 85

The Beginners' class at Lone Oak has week-day craft work lessons and some of the pupils have made very fine baskets, etc. In the primary department drawing is taught. Over at Monthalia needle work is included in the week-day program of the Sunday school.

One of Mr. Edmondson's chief interests has been that of leadership training. The Sunday school superintendent at Monthalia is a *model*. He is a recent convert to this church. The preacher, on taking up his work here, found this man one of his "hardest customers." When the pastor made him superintendent, people laughed and said: "He won't ever 'mount to nothin'." But he has become Mr. Edmondson's right-hand man, leads the singing and manages the school adequately. And every Sunday he attends a large class which the pastor teaches.

The cradle roll at Lone Oak has seven and at Monthalia five members. At Lone Oak a teacher-training class of eight meets weekly with Mr. Edmondson. The course of study is that prescribed by the Board and consists of a four-year course. To increase attendance, membership contests are held frequently. Sunday school picnics are for every one in the community. There are also quarterly socials for the whole school. A fine baseball team at Lone Oak, and a baseball team and a tennis team at Monthalia, furnish a good bit of sport for the two communities. The players are whizzes at games, which are the chief events of all big gatherings. The girls are good supporters of the teams and give their yells and sing and cheer.

At some of the community gatherings as many as three hundred are present. They are just big family affairs where groups get acquainted; mothers talk over their problems and swap recipes; farmers talk crops and discuss the value of "dipping" their cattle; young folks play games; and always there are plenty of "eats"—ice-cream cones, soda, pop between meals; at noon, regular banquets with fresh fried catfish from the Guadalupe, fried chicken, which is Sister Moses' specialty, salads, pies, cakes. Finer cooks would be hard to find, and they know it and are proud of it. Decision Day is observed with good results. Quarterly mission periods are held and regular mission offerings are sent to the M. E. Board. Three Monthalia pupils attend Sam Houston College and one from Lone Oak has entered Christian work during the last five years.

Four representatives from each school attended the district conference last year, their expenses being paid by the Sunday school. Both schools are self-supporting. Lone Oak school cost for running last year $41 and Monthalia $52.

### ORGANIZATIONS

The list on page 109 shows the successful result of Mr. Edmondson's attempt to build up a well-organized community program.

The church program includes the development of the spiritual, social, economic and physical life. Weekly and quarterly socials are held for the young people. House to house family socials are popular. Special community days and regular holidays are observed—especially Thanksgiving, Emancipation Day and Christmas. An annual Rural Life Institute is held in the interest of better farms and homes. Special lectures on health are given from time to time. The church and its various organizations care for the sick and the poor. Home and Farm Improvement lectures and mission talks are given; study classes meet with both Mr. and Mrs. Edmondson.

Minstrel shows furnish funds for special needs. The

MONTHALIA

| *Name* | *Members* | *Aver. Attend.* | *Meetings a Month* | *Ages* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ladies' Aid ..... | 9 | 9 | 1 | 20 up |
| Brotherhood ..... | 24 | 20 | 2 | 20 up |
| Epworth League . | 14 | 12 | 4 | 9 to 20 |

LONE OAK

| *Name* | *Members* | *Aver. Attend.* | *Meetings a Month* | *Ages* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Epworth League . | 9 | 9 | 6 | 11 to 20 |
| W.H.M.S. ..... | 8 | 6 | 2 | 20 up |
| Ladies' Aid ..... | 6 | 6 | 2 | 20 up |
| Poultry Club .... | 9 | 9 | 1 | 7 to 18 |
| Garden Club .... | 10 | 8 | 1 | 9 to 17 |
| Corn Club ..... | 8 | 8 | 1 | 11 to 17 |
| Pig Club ..... | 6 | 6 | 1 | 9 to 16 |

men of the church have helped to improve the roads. At Monthalia entertainments are continually being given, including concerts, plays and literary entertainments. The pastor works here also with the boys' and girls' clubs for better gardens and live stock; and special Bible lectures are given through the winter. To help in the work of the circuit, Pastor Edmondson has the following standing committees:

1. Apportioned Benevolences.
2. Christian stewardship.
3. Foreign Missions.
4. Home Missions and church extension.
5. Religious Instruction.
6. Tracts.
7. Temperance.
8. Education.
9. Hospitals.
10. Education for Negroes.
11. Church records.
12. Auditing accounts.

13. Parsonage and furniture.
14. Church music.
15. Estimating ministerial support.
16. Examination of local preachers.

From this list will be seen another point stressed in Mr. Edmondson's ministry. He believes in placing responsibility upon the many, not only to lessen his own load but more especially to impress upon his people that they are really necessary parts of the organization.

### PUBLICITY

The pastor's mimeograph is a busy machine. Announcements are sent out repeatedly for special services. A weekly parish paper is sent into every colored home. Every one looks for this "Gonzales Circuit Rider." Some of the folks save the numbers and bind them at the end of the year. The paper is full of news, of church announcements, of inspirational paragraphs. The pastor is the editor, illustrator and publisher, and signs himself "Uncle Munn." There are Bible quotations, with short explanations and examples given below. There are paragraphs written in by members of the two churches, experiences and what these have meant in their lives. Sometimes a Sunday school lesson is explained in this paper. It says: "Your Uncle Munn will welcome your news—opinion—advice or anything you want published. Send them in early. This is *your* paper."

### A RESOURCEFUL LEADER

The Reverend J. L. S. Edmondson lives at Lone Oak. He receives as salary from his two churches $700 and from the church boards $300 a year. His buggy is the most frequently seen conveyance in Lone Oak and Monthalia.

This pastor is a Mississippian by birth, is country-raised and naturally fits a rural field. He has worked and cooked and thought his way through the George R. Smith College at Sedalia, Missouri, and through Gammon Seminary; has studied agriculture at the Lincoln Institute and taken special

summer courses in canning, preserving and meat-curing at Wylie School for pastors.

The Lone Oak-Monthalia charge is his first appointment and he has been there five years. Looking back at the little cabin where Mr. and Mrs. Edmondson and their three young children live, one remembers first the friendliness of them all. Mrs. Edmondson has a "How-do-you-do?" and a friendly smile for every one she meets. Mr. Edmondson is serious-minded; but he knows how to laugh. At a baseball game he is the liveliest man on the bleachers. He is a born leader, a genial, human, understanding soul; and he has succeeded through sheer *work*. And he is not afraid. From morning till night this pastor and his wife are engaged in the business of serving others and they will tell you "it has paid." They have lifted Lone Oak and Monthalia out of age-old ruts and made their people hold up their heads. They are proud of the people, whom they have found so loyal and so ready to coöperate when given a little help and encouragement.

They are looking forward to better days when, with the land free from debt and with new church equipment, they may the more independently carry on the great work so nobly begun.

They are out for better schools. The dark little one-room shacks, each with one teacher and many pupils—eighty-five at Lone Oak and seventy-six at Monthalia—are no longer good enough. One improvement begets another; and now that these small cotton field communities have begun to come into their own, each with a well-developed leadership, a real neighborhood program, independence of livelihood and a renewed assurance that *it really counts*—surely better days are ahead.

The people market their crops and go to the movies at Gonzales, and from Gonzales they receive their mail; but at home in Lone Oak and Monthalia they have found that a church in a rural community can minister to the development of every phase of community life, as well as afford religious instruction, if only, as Mr. Edmondson puts it, "the shepherd and the sheep will travel along the same road."

# Chapter IX

## WHERE THE CHURCH IS EVERYTHING

## BUCKHORN, KENTUCKY

*A church that is responsible for everything, from the saw-mill to the college.*

This is the story of a leavening influence in a section of America jealously guarded by the hand of a prodigal Nature, of men and women whose ancestors preferred these almost inaccessible pockets of our Southern Appalachian mountains to the lure of our western prairies. This mountain chain was settled by a purely American white population of English and Scotch ancestry. Perhaps the latter element predominates in their conservative individualistic temperament, for instances are found of families that migrated westward after the Civil War, but who soon returned to their native Highlands.

This primitive region of about two hundred and fifty counties, with heavily forested mountains teeming in coal and mineral riches that await development, is incongruously described as "the backyard of the South." The neglect implied in this phrase is largely due to the fact that these scattered settlements along the banks of creeks and rivers and among precipitous mountains have no political significance. Were their votes more effective these "backyard" citizens would receive more attention, but until the treasures of their mountains, the timber and minerals, are made accessible, "backyard" citizens they will remain.

Meanwhile their history and customs, their primitive and secluded life, their folklore and ballads, and especially the fervor and tenacity of their Protestant faith, compel admiration. It is this primitive American civilization, rather than the human passions and feuds which have given this region

publicity and obscured the sterling qualities of the people, that commends the Southern Highlander to our attention. Our social and religious traditions have been so profoundly modified that it is good to rediscover their original flavor.

### THE CHOICE OF A PARISH CENTER

The scene of this story is laid in the Allegheny-Cumberland belt of the Southern Highlands. Buckhorn, in Perry County, Kentucky, is close to the conjunction of Perry, Clay, Leslie, Owsley and Brethitt counties. The nearest station is Altro, Kentucky, on the Lexington, Jackson and McRoberts Branch of the Louisville-Nashville Railroad, one hundred and thirteen miles southeast of Lexington. The journey from Altro is one of eight miles in the saddle over the mountain trails and precipitous valleys with their rushing alpine streams. In such inspiring scenery live the parishioners of Buckhorn. It is a surprise to find a struggling valley settlement at the junction of the Middle Fork of the Kentucky River and Squabble Creek, lighted by electricity, with many houses furnished with baths and running water, a modern group of buildings whose saw- and grist-mills and barns are so much better than any others encountered in the region.

If this parish center had been selected for its natural scenery alone none could have been more ideal. But other, more practical, considerations entered into this choice of Buckhorn. Here was a settlement, a trade center, water-power, an unusual amount of arable land, which is a prime factor in this mountainous country, timber and coal in abundance. The chief advantage lay in the fact that as the valleys are the travel routes, they converged upon Buckhorn, which is one of the most accessible points in a difficult region.

It is now twenty years since the Rev. Harvey S. Murdock first came into the region to investigate some mission work that needed funds. He had completed his college and seminary courses and was serving his apprenticeship in a branch of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, of

Brooklyn, N. Y. His report on this field among the Southern Highlanders was so favorable that the necessary funds were granted, and the young pastor received and accepted the call to his life work. To-day Buckhorn church has a membership of seven hundred and four, a group of buildings that are rendering a great service to the far-flung mountain community, a valuable tract of land for agricultural demonstration purposes and recreation, a loyal group of supporters and workers, and a growing army, whose numbers unfortunately have not been recorded, of those who have passed through its school and church influence and are spreading it in less favored communities.

### NATURE A STERN NURSE

The social and religious conditions of the people among whom Mr. Murdock began his life work were primitive. The extreme isolation developed and concreted certain opinions, practices and characteristics that had grown to menace the people of the region. This was due to the general condition of illiteracy and the lack of remedial education. More than 20 per cent. of the voting males were illiterate and a much higher proportion of the women and children. The local schools were of the most primitive character, and even now, as then, the children are kept from school for seasonal harvests or labor.

Certain advantages among a primitive society like this commend themselves to the attention, and part of the success attained by Mr. Murdock's work in Buckhorn and its vicinity is due to utilizing them. Necessity and close contact with a relentless nature have given these people an elemental wisdom in the use of their natural resources. Coal is cropped from the surface of the mountains, and nearly every family has its little mine. The highlanders have learned to satisfy their wants and needs as far as possible from their environment, and while their environment has at the same time closed them in from the progressive world, it has compensated for this by developing a sturdy character that is instinct with self-reliance. They have, how-

ever, for so long done things for themselves that theory, when applied to such problems as their unsanitary conditions, their physical and mental disabilities, is not always cordially received.

This intense individualism has shaped the ethical and social standards of these southern mountaineers. In their isolation they have for so long waged warfare in order to survive against the laws of a relentless, prodigal nature that, having triumphed and successfully controlled them, they are not readily amenable to the laws of man. They have for so long been a law to themselves in the course of their long isolation in these mountain fastnesses that the slow and distant machinery of law and justice irks their sensitive and passionate temperament. Crimes of violence and feuds are common in so primitive and individualistic a society. When the whole mountain population is so closely interrelated that the accused must of necessity be tried by a jury consisting of his own or his victim's relations, there is little prospect of obtaining justice from a court. The same condition has led to their reputation as "moonshiners." Being individualists, they are not easily convinced that, because one has money with which to secure a license to distill whisky, he has therefore the right to make and sell it, while a poor man unable to purchase a license must be punished.

Into this society the modern world must bring its economic, social and spiritual resources. Until the great natural wealth in timber and minerals brings the railroad and improves communications, these little isolated communities must depend on outside agencies to bring them into touch with the privileges and benefits they need. At present they subsist on farming; corn, potatoes, sorghum and garden vegetables, with very little fruit, constitute their entire output. Sheep furnish them with food and clothing.

In these homes the spinning wheel is still in use for blankets and articles of domestic use. Their quilts are elaborately made and together with baskets have become articles of export trade. Manufactured clothing is preferred to the homespun garments of their forefathers, but at Buck-

horn efforts are being made to encourage the weaving of tweeds as the fireside industry for which their Scottish ancestors are still famous. Besides sheep, which thrive among their mountains, the small amount of low-lying land available for cultivation and grazing limits their stock to mules, pigs and a few cattle. Their homes require sites on this precious land so that the average tillable land per farm is two to three acres, with additional cultivation running up and down the mountainside at sharp angles. These slender agricultural resources keep the people poverty-stricken, especially as families average six and one-half persons.

Through the long years of their isolation these mountaineers have made their religious beliefs an important part of their narrow intellectual and emotional life. What forms of worship they brought into these mountains, or such as have found their way into their fastness to modify profoundly the original belief and practice, are now jealously guarded. The old toiler-preacher was their only pastoral experience. Being of their own soil and tradition he brought them nothing that would lift them out of themselves.

## "A COMMUNITY OF IDEALISTS"

For the type of Christian service required in such communities the worker must possess special qualifications. The pioneers of the Buckhorn work were people who loved nature and the simple people who lived so close to nature. They learned to appreciate the silence of the great mountains and little valleys or bottom lands along the creeks and rivers where the settlements lay, the trees, birds and flowers. A few years ago Newell Buck, the author of "The Call of the Cumberlands," visited this little community center, and wrote: "I found at Buckhorn a company of idealists who were attempting the impossible, and the strangest thing about it is that they are succeeding." How well they have been succeeding the Buckhorn of 1922 must answer, if only in part.

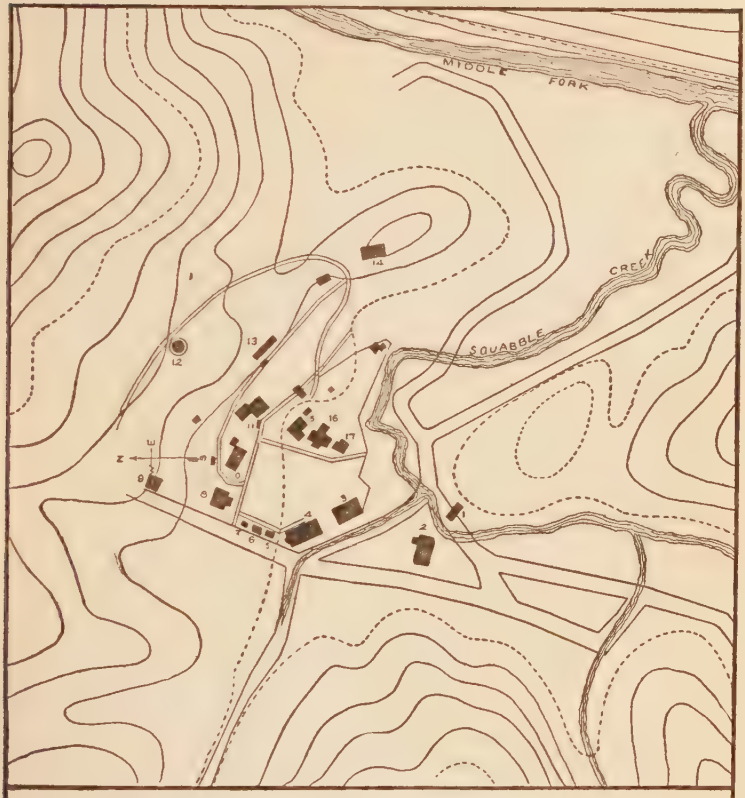
These workers relied upon the deep religious conviction of the people and their response to the Gospel of Christ as

THE BUCKHORN SETTLEMENT

THE PASTOR MAKES HIS ROUNDS AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER RIDES TO HER CLASS ON MULEBACK

ABOVE IS A GROUP OF URCHINS WHO HAVE RECENTLY BEGUN ATTENDING THE CHURCH SCHOOL

BELOW ARE TWO SENIOR STUDENTS JUST FINISHING THEIR COURSE




KEY

1. Grist Mill
   Saw Mill & Electric Plant.
2. Church.
3. Gymnasium.
4. Lafayette School Hall (2 Stories)
5. Manual Training Hall
6. Primary Hall.
7. Kindergarten.
8. Boys Home. (2 Stories)
9. Vice Presidents Home. (2 Stories)
10. Boys Dormitory. (3 Stories)
11. Presidents Home. (3 Stories)
12. Reservoir.
13. Hospital. (2 Stories) 10 Beds.
14. Girls Home. (2½ Stories)
15. Girls Dormitory. (3 Stories)
16. Dining Hall. (2 Stories)
17. Domestic Science Hall (2 Stories)

THE BUCKHORN PLANT

preached by the Protestant Church, in whose traditions they and their ancestors are steeped. With this common Christian understanding the workers at Buckhorn have slowly gained the confidence of this shy, suspicious, individualistic people by their economic, social and religious services to Buckhorn as well as those communities in the vicinity. They have created a new center out of Buckhorn, grinding corn and sawing lumber, caring for the sick folk and educating the young people. But the church has been the real center of all these services and activities. The ideal of Christian brotherhood and service is the only one wherewith to combat the religious and social demarcations, that begin with religious dissension and narrow sectarianism and end in family feuds and a non-moral atmosphere of law-breaking and prejudice against all forms of enlightenment.

The Buckhorn parish is organized and incorporated under the laws of the State of New York as the Buckhorn Association. The church, however, does not belong to the Association, but to the community: even though it was built out of the same funds that created the other buildings, it stands outside the enclosure. The school buildings, together with a saw- and grist-mill, the farm and its barn, electric light and water plants, are all the property of the Buckhorn Association, with offices in New York. The Dr. Brainard Memorial Hospital was established by a friend of the Buckhorn work in 1910. It has a doctor, ten beds and a paid nurse with two special nurses to help her. During a year about two thousand treatments were given in its clinics. The doctor is paid partly by the hospital and partly by the community. The farm is demonstrating the possibilities of the soil.

### THE PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

The church school is independent of the state, but the state avails itself of the efficient staff and modern equipment by paying Buckhorn school $1,000 to $1,190 a year for taking over the pupils of the district school for seven months. Buckhorn has its own permanent educational program interpreted by a staff of twelve to fifteen teachers, with

buildings that house teachers and pupils. In this school pupils of both sexes are taught from kindergarten through high school and prepared for college. The natural aptitude of the children of this independent, self-reliant race schooled in adversity, is exploited by Buckhorn to the utmost. The children, like their parents, are accustomed to make nearly all the implements of daily life, and full scope is given to this genius under expert teachers in the technical courses of the Manual Training School, a building 30′ x 22′, equipped with tools and simple machinery. The girls also receive technical training in the Domestic Science Hall, 36′ x 40′, and two stories high. There are also a Primary Hall, 36′ x 44′, with two rooms; a kindergarten, 22′ x 34′, equipped with the latest educational devices; a two-story home, 40′ x 50′, for small boys orphaned and stranded in the mountains; a three-story dormitory, 88′ x 36′, for seventy-five older boys, with a two-story addition, 32′ x 14′; a two-and-one-half story home, 54′ x 68′, for little girls; a three-story dormitory, 54′ x 48′, for seventy-five older girls; and a two-story building, 88′ x 48′, used as a dining-hall.

The children of these mountaineers, doing their share of labor from an early age, know how to work, but they must learn to play. The school plant now includes a gymnasium, 103′ 5″ x 71′ 5″, with basketball for the girls and young boys and other organized games. The pastor is an old college "fan," and it is natural to find a good baseball team whose prowess is known in Lexington, Winchester, and other urban and mountain centers. The pastor has personal charge of its training, and it is in the difficult rôle of umpire that his associate is spreading the code of sportsmanship among the children who did not know how to play, and to whom the idea of competition or rivalry raised the latent passion of family feud.

### WHERE THE POPULATION GOES TO CHURCH

It would not be fair to say that every one reached by Buckhorn parish is a worshiper, but it is accurate to say that wherever the church has had a preaching point for five or six years, practically every one attends church. This

is chiefly a tribute to the deep religious sentiment that is one of the marked characteristics of these mountaineers. Buckhorn's church auditorium comfortably seats about three hundred and fifty people, but it is a common thing to find seats for an overflow amounting to about four hundred and seventy-five. The regular attendance averages three hundred and fifty out of a membership of seven hundred and four. Besides the Wednesday evening service, with an attendance of two hundred and fifty, Buckhorn church conducts a series of evangelistic meetings which last for a week or more in every preaching point of the parish. Its Sunday school, however, has the phenomenal total membership of one thousand and thirty. This is due to the fact that the adults attend Sunday school and remain for the church service which follows. Buckhorn has a Christian Endeavor Society meeting with a membership of about two hundred.

Buckhorn village has increased about 100 per cent. during the twenty years of parochial work. As indicated, the work is not confined to Buckhorn proper. Every neighborhood in the vicinity is served by the two ministers, aided by teachers from the school. Nearly a dozen preaching points are in active operation, and the total Buckhorn parish enrolls nearly a thousand members, with eighty-nine added during the past year. This is in a community of about two thousand people.

The evangelistic services conducted by Buckhorn at these various points are not through imported evangelists but by the ministers of the parish, of whom two are stationed at Buckhorn and one at Cow Creek. The latter parish is not strictly a part of Buckhorn, though it is the result of Buckhorn endeavors. Cow Creek school was built and organized by the Buckhorn Association, which is now organized as a congregation. This has been the history of all but two or three churches within the Presbytery, which bears the name of the parent church—Buckhorn.

### FINANCES

For a short period, $2,400 was received from the Board of Home Missions, specially designated by the Lafayette

Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., for Buckhorn parish. This method of support continued until five years ago, when the work was incorporated as the Buckhorn Association under the laws of the State of New York. The State of Kentucky contributes about $1,000 for the seven-month school service, and the people, in proportion to their limited means, pay their share, amounting to about $1.08 per capita. During the past year Buckhorn parish itself has contributed $334 for benevolences. There is no general appeal for funds outside of the parish. Mr. Murdock annually presents his budget and explains the needs to the friends of the parish, most of whom are in the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., and the sum, amounting to about $25,000 per annum, is subscribed.

The Sunday services are not, however, the full extent of the religious work. All the pupils in school attend chapel services at eight o'clock in the school hall before the classes begin for the day. In each class the teacher has a period for the study of religion and the Bible. This religious training is in the mountain tradition where the daily life of the people is full of Biblical maxims and texts. Thus the school avails itself of this tradition and relates the religious training to all the subjects, especially in domestic and social science. It would be hard accurately to assess the rich fruitage of this work. The records of graduates have not been fully kept. Hundreds have passed, during twenty years, through the school and church influence of Buckhorn, going as preachers, teachers or home makers to the farthest recesses of the region and beyond. Some idea can be obtained by the fact that during these twenty years more than four hundred of these pupils became teachers. Moreover, the Vice-president of Buckhorn, the heads of the departments of manual training, agriculture, mathematics, English and history are all mountain boys graduated at Buckhorn. Not such a large proportion of women teachers are so trained, but all have a sympathetic understanding of the people. It has been found necessary to decline pupils owing to lack of accommodation. At present about four hundred students

are educated annually from kindergarten through high school.

### WHEN THE ANGELUS RINGS

The best evidence of the work and its influence in the region is the social and religious spirit that is a precious Christian leaven in a great wilderness. But it should be remembered that these people have long preserved a religious spirit, through years of isolation, which was their only solace and comfort in a hard life of adversity. One has merely to hear the angelus which calls the parish to prayer every day to understand this fervor. There is no fixed time for the angelus, but an elderly woman for many years has rung the bell, and as its first stroke echoes up and down the wooded valleys every man, woman and child for a few moments bows the head in reverence. There may be a clatter of dishes and a babble of conversation in the dining hall, or cries of children in the playground, or a lonely man or boy working in a patch on the mountainside. But all heed the angelus and cease for a moment's prayer. It is a beautiful custom, and one that is naturally and essentially the outward sign of the soul of these Southern mountaineers.

# Chapter X

## THE CHURCH AT THE CENTER

## DAVIS, CALIFORNIA

*Where the church has become the hub of a perfect wheel, whose rim encircles the entire community with all its agencies.*

"We put the churches at the bottom of the list as a kind of Christian foundation to the general business of the town," says an early history of Davis, California, in true New England fashion. Had the historian visited this prosperous little community in the Sacramento Valley in 1919, just fifty years after the organization of its one permanent Protestant church, he would have been surprised to find that the church had just begun to fulfill its responsibility to Davis as a "Christian foundation to the general business of the town."

Religious services, prayer meetings, Sunday school and occasional socials were being held, it is true; but in this educational center, which was growing chiefly because of the development of its agricultural college there was no program equal to the need. There was no special connecting link between the church and the community. As for business relations, they had never entered Davis' church-consciousness. Descendants of easterners who flocked west in 1849 in search of their "place in the sun" and who found it not in the gold fields but in the fertile valleys of the Sacramento River, the people of Davis to-day are proud, practical, conservative, and prosperous. The community grew up with the idea that "good fences make good neighbors" and coöperative development was almost unknown before the coming of the College of Agriculture in 1910. When,

from seventy-seven tracts under consideration, Davis was chosen as the location for this institution, the sleepy little village began to show its first signs of progress. From that time on the population steadily increased. Up-to-date business and farming methods fostered by the college were extended throughout the community. New life in Davis gave this all-American village something to live up to. Its 75 per cent. Protestant population early learned the lesson of "less church, more religion." Religious competition, church feuds and denominational antagonisms have been entirely lacking in its history.

Davis is unusual in that its eighteen hundred inhabitants are served by only two churches—the Roman Catholic church, with a small but constant membership, and the Community Presbyterian church which is now the very hub of the community, vitally connected with every agency and interest in the town. The present building, which bears witness to the forward-looking spirit of the people who planned it, has beneath its bungalow roof, a well-equipped auditorium, a social hall, seven separate Sunday school rooms and a businesslike little office. Evidently its builders hoped that some day a real community program might be carried on, though until recently there were few who believed such a program possible. Leadership there was, but not in action. Church funds were not systematically handled. The organization, like every other institution in Davis, was looking out for its own ends and quite indifferent to its responsibility beyond teaching religion.

### READY TO START; BUT STALLED

It was in 1919 that Rev. Nathan Fiske became pastor of the Presbyterian church and student pastor of the College of Agriculture. For years this man had dreamed of serving an entire community through the well-rounded program of just one strong central church organization; and here in Davis he found his opportunity to make his dream a reality.

He noted the church equipment, reasonably adequate for the housing of his program; the church's location, in the

very heart of Davis; the kind of people who attended services; the well-organized groups of men and women, students, professors, business men, Bible class and Ladies' Aid—all progressive, with unlimited possibilities for leadership if united in a common purpose. He noted the new $100,000 school building, new homes being built and new people coming in; the growing college and the leadership it represented; the prosperous farms; the splendid location of the community with regard to markets. He found that each day thirty-four stages and thirty-six passenger trains passed through Davis. He visioned the sort of future this community had every right to expect, with greater San Francisco less than one hundred miles to the south and Sacramento just next door. The fact that the Pacific and the Lincoln Highways crossed each other at Davis and that here was the junction point of the Union and the Southern Pacific railroads, meant inevitable progress to this pastor, who was also a shrewd business man. But he saw also that the business men were proceeding without reference to the surrounding farmers, who, for the most part, were still working out their problems alone. The community was running at loose ends. The task presented to Mr. Fiske was that of tying this central community church in some way to every agency in the village; and he determined to treat his problem as a business proposition.

His first move, then, was a challenge to the leadership of Davis which, as he expected, immediately rose to its feet, 100 per cent. strong. It was as if the citizens of the community had been waiting for his coming. Soon after Mr. Fiske came to Davis, a meeting was held to talk over plans for the sewerage system for the village. County and state officials were present and citizens heard much helpful discussion. Yards had open cesspools, some of them so many that their owners knew not where to dig another. At the close of the discussion not a citizen of Davis had anything to say, and the motion was made to adjourn. Even then no one said a word. Mr. Fiske, though a newcomer, could stand it no longer. He rose to his feet. He spoke only a few words but they were scathing ones. The sewerage system

was to cost only $5,500 and he asked those present why they were going to allow a delay in putting through this project so sorely needed. He asked which of those men was willing to lose one of his own children for the sum of $5,500, and told them what a plague of typhoid might mean to Davis and perhaps to their own families if they did not take immediate action toward bettering sanitary conditions. Before he had finished, three men were on their feet ready to talk. They had been wanting to say something all the while but were unaccustomed to speaking and each had been waiting for the others. A vote resulted in a decision which in short order put through the sewerage project.

### A BUSINESSLIKE START

One of the first developments at the church was the introduction of a systematic method of raising money. Twenty teams were sent out for the first annual every-member canvass. The work was quickly accomplished, for every one was found ready and willing to coöperate in the campaign, and 50 per cent. of the total amount subscribed came from non-members. Since 1920 benevolences have tripled, and all because of organized effort.

Up to two years ago the business men had had an organization to which only business men could belong. They looked out for their own narrow interests, and that was all. When Mr. Fiske arrived, they saw that he meant business and began to get acquainted with him; they saw that he would be a valuable member of their organization and decided to stretch a point and ask him to join. After all, was he not a business man with a very real business at the community church? He was admitted. Then later the question arose as to whether or not farmers should be classed as business men. And then came the college professors. Were they not business men? Well, the question was duly argued to a finish and the result was that all were asked to join the business men's organization, which learned many things from its new members with their varied experience. Before anybody knew it, this organization had become a full-fledged

chamber of commerce. Prejudices, once strong between town and country, were broken down, and the farmer and the business man found that their problems were, after all, each other's. Suspicions died a natural death.

Next Mr. Fiske became chaplain of the Masonic Lodge, and thus was made a connection between church and lodge activities. To forward civic improvement as rapidly as possible, he accepted the office of Board Director of the Community Service organization. Meantime he was visiting throughout his parish. He could talk chickens with the farmers because he had raised chickens and in fact had paid for his first automobile with egg money. He had preached the Gospel to the lumberjack, the cowboy, the city man and the farmer, and was at home with them all.

### TYING UP WITH THE COMMUNITY

An opportunity soon offered itself for the linking of church and school. Only a few of the pupils who went regularly to the high school at Woodlands were from families owning automobiles; and those who had machines were accustomed to crowd the others into their cars and race all the way to Woodlands. It was a dangerous proceeding and each day the parents became more worried. Mr. Fiske, with the school principal and a few leading citizens, conceived the idea of forming an association and purchasing a school bus. Every child's parent had to join this organization before the child could ride on the school bus. Every member was asked to go on a note at the bank for $3,000, with which a truck was purchased; and a top was made to order under the personal supervision of the pastor. A driver was hired at $100 a month, who should be responsible for the trips and report any misdemeanors. Every member agreed to stay by the association, unless he moved away, or until his child should leave school. The bus, driver and children were all adequately insured—the children against accident and death and the car against accident, fire and theft. Then those in charge went to the high school in Woodlands and obtained from the authorities an appropriation of five dollars

for each child riding. Ten dollars a month per child was paid by the association, making a net cost of five dollars per child for the parent. At the end of the first year, in addition to paying the driver, upkeep and insurance, the association had paid $1,400 on the original note. This year an effort is being made to obtain the services of a Woodlands teacher who will ride back and forth on the bus and act as supervisor. The association agrees to pay for her board and room. The charge per child will not be increased and the same rebate will be received from the high school at Woodlands; but the remainder of the debt will be paid in part this year and in part next. By a third year, transportation costs can be reduced and the remainder of the debt easily paid.

Day school and Sunday school began to join annually in a great picnic. Last year this real young people's community celebration began with a big parade. There were class yells, and one of the business men furnished a band for the affair. Then off they all went in trucks, banners flying, the cars all decorated, to the picnic grounds near the canal. "They painted things red. It was a humdinger picnic," said the pastor. The community is behind school development, body and soul. "We're all one" is the spirit.

Mr. Fiske is a member of the Parent-Teachers' Association, which has become very active in Davis and which last year put in cement walks around the new school building and furnished funds for free lunches. The lunches were much needed, for the county nurse found 60 per cent. of the children under weight, despite the fact that they live in the healthy climate of this wonderful valley. It was the Parent-Teachers' Association which, with the help of the Community Service organization, bought the new playground apparatus.

A Daily Vacation Bible School was successfully held in 1922 with an enrollment of fifty-five. The school authorities offered the use of the building for the course, and one business man was so interested that he asked Mr. Fiske if he might have a moving picture made of the activities of the school. He came early one morning and did not leave until

DAVIS PRESPYTERIAN CHURCH

THE DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL FOR THE TEACHING OF WHICH THE EX-SERVICE MAN ON THE LEFT HAS VOLUNTEERED HIS SERVICES

long after noon. A hundred-foot reel was made, showing all that happened during the session. This reel was shown at the Synod meeting at Pasadena and was found to be the only one of its kind in the country.

### WIDENING THE FIELD OF SERVICE

When the school opened it was thought that if fifteen pupils enrolled it would be all one could hope for. But the membership grew daily. The children were delighted. There were classes in handwork and sewing; there were story hours, with perhaps a real parade down to the church for a movie; there were games and yells and songs. Sometimes, during the surprise period, they all went downtown for ice cream cones—in short, the D. V. B. S. became the most popular place in town during the entire term. The best advertising possible was done by the children themselves, who were heard to say: "Come on—we have movies there and *everything.*"

The school building is also available for moving pictures and stereopticon lectures. Here, too, are held the "Y Mixers," for the school has by far the finest auditorium in Davis. Gradually the church began to belong to all who affiliated with Protestant Christianity, coöperating with the Baptist and Congregational organizations, though officially connected with the Presbyterian body, in order adequately to meet the needs of an educational center. The aim was to unite all Christian forces of the community in the development of Christian leadership and citizenship. To carry on the work the church staff was increased. A Y. M. C. A. man, a college graduate, became a co-worker with the pastor with headquarters at the college. He has lined up the boys' work and is the connecting link between the two institutions. He has charge of "Y Mixers," encourages right friendships, runs an employment bureau in connection with the co-operative store. On Sundays and one evening each week he has charge of discussion groups. He receives part of his salary from the Y. M. C. A. and part from church boards, and is the pastor's right-hand man.

With a view to lining up the entire parish for service and sociability, a trained parish worker was added to the staff. Mrs. Goodman has had wide experience in girls' camp and Y. W. C. A. activities and knows her work from A to Z. She has done a great deal during the past year in making the parish coterminous with the community by the working out of a new parish visiting plan.

In order to make "everybody acquainted with everybody else," the Ladies' Aid voted to coöperate by following a program of interchanging calls. The whole community was divided into block divisions with a captain over each division. The duty of the captains is to report to the church office the coming of any new families, any change of address by a family, any case of sickness, or anything else that may afford the church an opportunity to render service. They are to see that every one in each district is acquainted with every one else, and especially they are to welcome and assist newcomers in ways that will make them feel at home in the Davis community family.

### DEVELOPING A UNIFIED PROGRAM

While the organization work was proceeding successfully, a unified program was being projected. The Ladies' Aid was reorganized and membership grew to one hundred and twelve—the leading woman's organization of Davis. The men's Bible class, with a new lease of life, became known as the Citizens' Class and practically supplanted the work of the Community Service organization. With a membership of fifty, this group of Davis citizens began to meet regularly for social and community activities as well as on Sundays for Bible study. The chairman of the County Board of Supervisors is an active member, as are nearly all the leading business and professional men of Davis. County officers and specialists along various lines address the men from time to time. The subjects presented are very varied. Public health, civic welfare, community needs, economic welfare, public morals, law enforcement, charity and correction, education, recreation, religious coöperation and public wor-

ship are all discussed. New plans are under way. There are hopes that soon the two farm bureaus may be united in one good strong organization at Davis. The committee on schools has been suggesting school consolidation. It is the first effort along this line and although the suggestion was defeated this year still, as the men say, "The ball has been set rolling. Speakers from Berkeley have laid the question before the people and when the time comes it will surely go through." The Citizens' Class is also interested in a project for a high school for Davis. The cemetery committee has succeeded in getting a list of signatures sufficiently large to satisfy the County Board of Supervisors that Davis should include in its taxes a fund to keep the cemetery in repair.

Another activity of the class has been the education of voters. At election time four men were stationed in different parts of the town to give voters information and otherwise aid them. It was announced in church just where each of the workers would be on that day. Through this plan Davis cast a 90 per cent. vote, a higher proportion than at any previous election.

Other projects are under way, including the organization of a debating club among the college boys who are to come frequently to service and discuss moral problems.

Plans for the future look toward the organization of a junior church and an orchestra. The church plans to hold public health meetings at which county hospital men will speak. The whole aim is to tie up all the agencies of Davis in one way or another to the community church. Denominationalism has been forgotten. One of the elders is a Congregationalist. The chairman of the Board of Trustees is a Baptist. A Disciple teaches the intermediate boys' class in Sunday school. Another trustee is a Methodist—yet all are right-hand men as well as are others of the Presbyterian denomination.

Every Sunday morning and evening preaching services are held at the community church with an average attendance of one hundred and fifty and seventy-five, respectively, except when pictures are shown, when the evening attend-

ance averages two hundred. The midweek service is held regularly. Mr. Fiske feels that the title "prayer meeting" is obsolete and has therefore changed the name to "church night service." Services are straightforward and Mr. Fiske uses no pulpit and no notes. He just talks to his people and what he says goes straight home to every person in the congregation. "Prayer meetings are all right," said the pastor, "but nowadays the few faithful people who would be interested in a prayer meeting are not the ones that need one. A midweek service must make an appeal to the people who *need* to pray, who need to be helped to learn the value of week-day religion."

Thirty-five per cent. of those who attend services, evening as well as morning, are non-members; 60 per cent. are men, 25 per cent. women, 10 per cent. young people and 5 per cent. children. But nearly all who attend are members of some church and are gladly affiliating with the Davis church while living in the community. Occasional services are held by an Episcopal rector for those who wish services of this denomination. The Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese came once during last year for such a service.

### SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Every year many special days are celebrated. Soon after college opens a faculty day is observed. Following the special service, luncheon is served in the social room. Each person brings a basket lunch, the church furnishes coffee and dishes. At this service last year fifty-eight faculty people and thirty-eight of their children were present. Every professor is invited, so is every faculty family. After luncheon there is a social conference at which is discussed the question—"How can we, as a faculty family into whose hands California has given its boys, develop moral fiber?" This conference brings about a consciousness of fellowship between the church and college faculty wherein they share each other's responsibilities.

Another meeting held each year is that of Farmers' Day, coming soon after the harvest is gathered, when farmers

from miles around come in for a real community meeting. At Christmas time a community Christmas service is held at the school to which every one in Davis is invited and in which every one is interested. Once a year a great congregational dinner is served to all church members. The members' reception, held annually, serves as a sort of Decision Day. Just now the pastor is holding a series of services especially for students and considering various subjects, such as, "Is the Bible True?" Mr. Fiske is an idealist, but an idealist with both feet on the ground and his eyes ever watching the future in order that his church shall in no way fall short of fulfilling every need of the community. Men who have been off hunting with Mr. Fiske say: "This preacher is a 'crack shot.'" His gospel is not only "reading the Bible, but behaving it." He believes in the church as an organization of "not hearers only but doers." He says, "Wherever there has been failure in the rural ministry it has inevitably been caused by discouragement. The rural pastor has never before had the means whereby he could accomplish what he desired. If he ever had any dreams of success, scarcely ever has he had the wherewithal to make them come true."

At the State Fair at Sacramento every one in the rabbit exhibit building was asking: "Who is Fiske of Davis? Who is Fiske of Davis?" It seems that this pastor entered nine rabbits at the fair and took nine prizes, notwithstanding the fact that he spent no time in preparing for them. On the day the fair opened the pastor remembered that he had promised to exhibit his rabbits. So he grabbed them out of the hutches, packed them into his car and, without even combing out the old fur, landed them in the exhibit. The woman of whom he bought the rabbits some time ago won only nine points on her exhibit and the pastor won fifteen. The crowd wondering about Fiske of Davis did not know that he was the moderator of the Presbytery of Sacramento, the vice-president of the Davis Parent-Teacher Association, a member and director of the Business Men's Association, chaplain of a Masonic Lodge, member of the Board of Directors of the National Community Service Association,

chairman of the Administration Division of the Sacramento Presbytery, member of the Advisory Board of the Y. M. C. A., an assistant scout master, member of the Board of Directors of the High School Bus Association, a member of the State Synodical Committee on Education, vice-president of the North California Rabbit Breeders' Association, member of the Synodical Field Council, pastor and student pastor of Davis and pastoral counselor of the Yosolano Christian Endeavor. This last-named position he feels is most important; for as a result of this contact with the Christian Endeavor organizations of the two counties he has been able to bind together all the communities. He attends all executive meetings and helps with their programs.

Just now a project is under way to add to the church, already so serviceable, a $25,000 wing for community activities; and also to build a temporary $6,000 building at the college for Y. M. C. A. headquarters.

During the last year thirty-three people became members of the church, twenty-three by letter and ten by confession of faith. The total present membership, including twenty-four non-residents, is one hundred and seventy-four. The average attendance of the Sunday school is larger than the entire church enrollment, the total membership being two hundred and thirty-six, of whom fifty are from farm homes.

There have been many changes in the once sleepy little town since Mr. Fiske came. Everywhere is evidence of a big future for the community because the people have fully awakened to the situation, have caught the vision of the progressive church and are ready to pull together for greater social, economic, educational and religious development. As Mr. Fiske has said: "It's all one job, this work of the Kingdom, and the sooner we stop splitting it up into many jobs the sooner will we begin to accomplish something."

# Chapter XI

## SELF-AMERICANIZATION

## STANTON, IOWA

*A liturgical church which still uses a foreign language for some services but which with real vision is holding together and helping to blend the old and the new.*

The Mamrelund Lutheran Church of Stanton, Iowa, presents an example of a transplanted foreign community gradually absorbed into its American environment while retaining the rare qualities of its European heritage. The little colony in Stanton was 100 per cent. Swedish when it came at the call of its forerunner, the Swedish-American pastor, Rev. B. M. Halland. This pastor, then serving the Swedish-Lutheran Augustana Synod of North America in the parish of Burlington, Iowa, heard of an impending land settlement along the Burlington railroad in Montgomery and Page counties. The railroad was being built from Creston to Omaha, and Pastor Halland secured a two-year option on land on both sides of the tracks in the two counties, he to have full charge of the placing of settlers.

As was natural, the pastor immediately thought of his own flocks, people of his own race and faith. At Andover, Galesburg and other points in Illinois, were recent settlements of Swedish-Lutherans. In the homeland overseas were more men and women of a type the pastor wanted for so arduous and uncertain an adventure. Though the first excursions for these Swedish settlers ran into Page and Montgomery counties in 1869, Pastor Halland was discriminating in his selection of those who formed the nucleus of his colony, and it was not until 1870-71 that his painstaking efforts brought notable results, and a great influx of settlers followed. Hav-

ing set the tone he had small cause to fear the coming of undesirable elements. The pastor, with the vision of the Stanton that was to be in his mind, met and ministered to the incoming flocks in primitive fashion—in English in the tents of the railroad crews, and in Swedish at the sod huts of his Swedish settlers. Before any idea of improved shelters and physical comforts, came the idea of a church like the church in the homeland overseas. The congregation was incorporated by Pastor Halland, June 25, 1870.

### THE OLD AND THE NEW

Never was a more indigenous spiritual organization. It was in form and character Swedish; but it received a new birth on American soil, so that to-day the church at Stanton, with its traditional European social and religious background, is as richly American as any native institution.

The charter members of this American rural church comprised forty-three communicants and thirty-one children. That was half a century ago. The story of the West has been one of unrest, of constant migrations, as the trails have opened on more alluring vistas or rumors have flown of gold and silver bonanzas; yet this little community remained steadfast to its new church and home—"the big white church in the little white town."

The settlers were turning the sod and making the best of living in sod houses. There was neither time nor call for more elaborate habitations. A greater need of the community was its spiritual satisfaction. And so the Mamrelund church was the first elaborate building erected. It was built by joint effort and dedicated to public use.

In 1878 a religious revival swept the community, and a theological point of difference led to the secession of those who believed that an individual and personal religious experience should prove the method of admission to the church. It was more or less an inherited controversy from the homeland, constituting a disavowal of the traditional teaching of the State Church of Sweden. On April 3, 1879, the dis-

senters founded the Swedish Evangelical, or Lutheran Mission Church. With a church building capable of accommodating four hundred and fifty, its diminished congregation of one hundred and thirty-seven now represents only the village. No farmers from the surrounding country belong to it, as the increased social and religious facilities offered by the original and larger church prove more attractive. No vestige of the original controversy survives between the two churches to-day, the little church working in harmony with the Mamrelund church in serving Stanton village.

The first structure of the Mamrelund church was true to its pioneer environment, and reflected the character of its congregation. It was built thirty-two feet wide and forty-two feet long, with a temporary pulpit and altar table, while the pews consisted of planks supported on wooden blocks. But for all these rough, improvised devices it was no less a house of worship, a religious home that was not unlike the rude homes of its builders. Its simplicity and rigorous practicability reflected the character and ambitions of its builders, for it is said that the amount of money subscribed for its erection was equal to the financial rating of the entire congregation.

This early devotion to the faith of their fathers was carefully fostered and observed by the entire community. Attendance at services was exemplary in its regularity. The services were naturally conducted in Swedish. The membership increased by an average of fifty new members a year as the settlement grew. During the pastorate of the founder's successor, Pastor A. J. Ostlin, of Cheriton, Iowa, from 1883 to 1893, a new building was planned, sixty feet wide and one hundred feet long; and the community undertook to erect this more ambitious edifice. No architect was engaged, no contracts were made. Moreover, at this early period, before the community was ready to function in the American tradition which it has since acquired, and while it was still in transition from its social Swedish background, none was allowed to drive a nail into the new structure who was not of Swedish extraction.

Since the church is built on a hill, its spire is visible for miles around to its members in town and country. Once more the unselfish spirit that made possible the construction of the pioneer church was shown in the readiness with which many members subscribed or pledged sums equal in value to their property. In 1920 it was found necessary to meet increased demands for space. Through the work of volunteers the basement was enlarged and separate suites of rooms were constructed for the women and the men and their respective organizations, which amply complement the auditorium space and the storeroom. These added facilities cost more than $6,000, but the Luther League has undertaken the payment, and when the survey was made had raised all but $1,000 of the amount.

### "HALLAND SETTLEMENT"

In the same year that Pastor Halland built the first Mamrelund Lutheran church at Stanton he also organized congregations of Bethesda, ten miles south, and at Nyman, eleven miles southwest of Stanton. His call brought Swedish settlers who took up land over a large section of the southern part of Montgomery and the northern part of Page counties. There are now, within a radius of twenty-five miles, six thriving Lutheran congregations which owe their inception to the vision of Pastor Halland—Stanton, Bethesda, Fremont, Red Oak, Tabor and Essex. With Stanton as the mother settlement church, these congregations have justly been designated the "Halland Settlement." The tradition of the founder of this settlement has proved an inspiration to the five successors in his pastorate, each one of whom has made his mark not only in Stanton itself but in other parts of the country.

### STANTON COMMUNITY

Stanton is not at the mercy of those shifting economic and social tides that have swept certain sections of the country, and which have drawn the youth and ambition of countless

communities into the vortex of urban competition, or have swamped rural communities by the growth of industrial towns in their neighborhoods. Stanton is self-sufficient and self-contained in all its economic and social aspects; it is far-reaching in its religious influence.

The rolling country, heavy in loam, determines the agricultural character of the community. Crops of corn, wheat, oats and hay supply the main business of stock-raising, which is estimated as follows: Swine, 75 per cent.; cattle, 20 per cent.; horses, sheep and poultry, 5 per cent. Of the total number of farms, four hundred and sixty-eight, only seventy are operated by tenants. From the original value of six dollars to eleven dollars an acre in Pastor Halland's time, land has now reached the price of $215 an acre. The only industry, that of flour, is linked to the economic life of the community. From the tiny hamlet of sod huts that sheltered Pastor Halland's little flock of hardy, God-fearing settlers, Stanton has grown about its church until to-day there are 3,558 people, of whom 750 live in Stanton village, and 2,808 in the surrounding country. Of the total of 638 homes 152 are in the village and 486 in the open country.

### THE FARMER BUSINESSMAN

In Stanton there is a Commercial Club that fosters a healthy spirit of coöperation between the village and the surrounding country. The Mercantile Company was organized in May, 1919, to conduct a general retail business in hardware, farming implements and produce. It has a capital of $47,000, and no stockholder may control more than $1,000 worth of stock. It now has a membership of one hundred and twenty-four. Last year $82,000 worth of business was done in the immediate neighborhood of Stanton. Interest is paid in dividends on stock, and the balance is divided on a pro rata basis among purchasing members. Of a similar character are two other enterprises in Stanton. The Grain Elevator Co. was organized in 1919 to enable the farmers of Stanton to secure a better market. The stock is not limited to coöperating farmers, but there are at

present one hundred and fifteen members, none of whom may own more than $1,000 worth of stock. The amount of business done during 1921 amounted to $221,000.

The Live Stock Shipping Co. began activities on January 1, 1922. Like the two preceding enterprises it is devoted to the interests of Stanton and its vicinity. This organization, however, is strictly coöperative. The manager is guaranteed $100 per month with a small commission on all business done. The annual membership dues are $2.50. Every member has a vote and profits are declared on a pro rata basis. The organization is financed entirely from its profits. During the first seven months $180,000 worth of business was done. This included the shipment of seven thousand hogs and seven hundred head of cattle. It will be seen that this coöperative enterprise concerns itself with the main interest of the community—stock-raising. The farmers of the community are, moreover, the *bona fide* business men, and thus the social and economic cleavage and consequent jealousy, the charges of exploitation wherever middlemen appear, do not exist here. Town and country are practically one in their economic, social and religious interests.

The social activities naturally center upon the church, with its one thousand and twenty members. There are secular organizations like the American Legion with seventy-six members, the Legion Auxiliary, and four lodges. There are also four clubs, including a Tennis and an Athletic Association, which keep alive an interest in out of doors and healthy sportsmanship. During the war a local chapter of the Red Cross was active. For public gatherings a hall is used as a lyceum and theater, where concerts are given by the high school orchestra and band or by the Community Glee Club and Chorus. One of the public events is the community picnic. The only unhealthy, illegal influence that persists in the town is bootlegging, which keeps well under cover. The real initiative for leadership lies with the church members. It is casually remarked in Stanton that no one can become a leader until he joins the church. About three-quarters of those identified with all community enterprises,

as well as all the leaders in village and community life, are members of the Mamrelund Lutheran Church.

### CHURCH FINANCE

The land owned by the Mamrelund Lutheran Church is valued at $12,000. The building is worth $40,000, the big thirteen-room parsonage $7,000, and an adjunct building, which provides a residence for worthy members of the church when the need arises, is valued at $4,000. The old cemetery, now closed, is endowed, so that its future maintenance in appropriate fashion is ensured. The church is free from debt. This prosperous condition is maintained by the annual quota system of assessment, ranging from fifty dollars per man and wife or family to five dollars. The quota is assessed by a finance committee according to the financial rating of the members. In this annual quota are included all items, such as benevolences and foreign missions. This budget system is unique. No quota is placed higher than fifty dollars, even though many members are financially able and would be willing to give more. The various organizations raise special funds by selling refreshments which are donated by special committees. The Ladies' Aid Society, the Women's Home and Foreign Missions Society, the Boys' and Girls' Missionary societies, all use successfully this method of raising funds.

### "MEMBERS—ONE OF ANOTHER"

Besides the usual transference of membership by letter, there is, owing to the liturgical character of the Lutheran church, only one method of recruiting membership. This is through confirmation. Thus the confirmation class in the Mamrelund Church is a carefully organized system of induction to membership. There are two classes, one for adults and one for young people fourteen to fifteen years of age. From January to September the class is under the special instruction of a competent Sunday school teacher. This course is supplemented by one directly conducted by

the pastor on Saturday afternoons for eight months. The subjects of instruction, which is in both Swedish and English, are the Bible, Church Catechism, Bible history and topics of public interest which are covered by lectures. The course ends in confirmation coincident with graduation from the regular Sunday school course, which is likewise bilingual. The adult class ranges in ages from seventeen years upward, and attends a series of Sunday afternoon lectures in the tenets and doctrines of the Lutheran Church. No memory work is required of the adults. In 1921 there were twenty-five attending this class. After the course is ended, those taking it are invited to become members of the church through confirmation, and invariably all receiving instruction become confirmed.

### SERVICES IN TWO LANGUAGES

Mention has been made of the strong nationalistic feeling maintained in the early days of the Halland Settlement, when none but those of Swedish extraction was allowed to drive a nail into the new church building. To-day, of the two services, one, in the morning, is conducted in Swedish, the other, in the evening, in English while the pages of the parish paper carry notices printed in the two languages side by side. Though Swedish is still used in church services for the benefit of the older generation neither the community nor its church is less American than are many New England or southern or Pennsylvania communities with British or Dutch heritage. Already the younger generation greatly outnumbers the older, and it is merely a matter of time when English will entirely supplant Swedish. At the communion service both languages are used in the ritual of ministration, and occasionally a short English sermon is preached.

The church services follow the full liturgical Lutheran version, with a robed choir. The attendance is large and general. On Sunday mornings and evenings the little white houses of Stanton are empty; their occupants are all in the big church. Preceding the evening service on every second

Sunday, the organist gives a fifteen-minute organ recital of classical pieces, and at the evening services special numbers are often rendered by the choir of fifty voices.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday school enrollment is five hundred and sixty-two, and the average attendance three hundred—a remarkably high average when one remembers that of the five hundred and sixty-two members, four hundred and twenty are living on farms in a community where the roads might be better. The Sunday school also is bilingual. When the main classes meet in the sanctuary for services in English, the elders take their places in the rear under the gallery and follow the opening exercises, after which they have their own session in Swedish. In the gallery of the church the Adult English Bible Class, with a membership of one hundred and sixty, is conducted by the pastor. It includes members from the confirmation age of fifteen to one lady of seventy-five. This old lady, when asked why she did not attend the Swedish class like others of her age and generation, replied: "I have always studied the Bible and know it in Swedish. Now I want to know it in English."

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Once a year during the summer, when the weather is inviting, is held an Old Folks' Day. All those over seventy are the guests of the church on this occasion, each receiving a special invitation, printed in Swedish, and a special badge. A speaker from outside the community addresses the gathering in Swedish, and the Girls' Missionary Society provides a suitable banquet. An offering is taken up for the support of the Old Folks' Home of the Conference.

The annual Harvest Festival, held in September, is a picturesque survival of a beautiful European custom, and one that fittingly belongs in a rural church like that of Stanton. The morning service is in Swedish, with special speakers. It is followed by a community dinner attended

by nearly six hundred people who pay twenty-five cents for the meal, which is furnished by the Ladies' Aid Society. In the afternoon a big missionary program is given under the auspices of the Ladies' Missionary Society, and an annual collection of about $300 is taken for the cause of missions in China and India.

Another interesting event is the Father and Son Banquet, attended by three hundred and two men and four hundred boys in 1921. It was held in the rooms of the Luther League. The high school orchestra played and before the banquet there was community singing. This was not altogether a church gathering, since the members of both the churches as well as of the Commercial Club were on the committee that arranged the event.

The "home" atmosphere is persistently cultivated in all the contacts between the church and the community, and every New Year's evening the Luther League holds a cordial home-coming party for relatives and friends of the parish who are visiting the home town.

For the young people there are various junior societies. The girls of the Junior Missionary Society sew and prepare articles for annual sale, the proceeds of which go to foreign missions. There are two meetings a month, and members are divided into groups under competent instruction according to their ability to sew. The mothers serve refreshments at these meetings. The Boys' Home Missionary Band meets simultaneously with the girls in the Bible Class Room. The boys have declamation contests twice a year when prizes are awarded. They are trained for these contests and work with as great enthusiasm as if they were college or interstate affairs.

Perhaps the largest and most important organization in the Mamrelund Church is the Luther League. It began as the Young People's Society more than thirty years ago. In 1902 it was united with the other young people's organizations, which had increased as the church had grown, and its activities, social and religious, were multiplied. The Church owes its fine pipe organ to the Luther League. The records for the 'nineties show that the League organized fourteen

THE BIG WHITE CHURCH IN THE LITTLE WHITE TOWN

coffee meetings, six concerts, two oyster suppers, two auction sales, and a necktie sale, and the organ was installed in 1897 from the proceeds of these various efforts. In 1913 the League raised funds and placed a memorial window in the gable of the tower in honor of the founder, Pastor Halland. In 1914 it paid for the rebuilding of the gallery, the moving of the organ, the carpeting of the church; and, as has already been seen, the League, in the early days, assumed responsibility for the enlarging of the church basement to furnish rooms for the various societies. The meetings of the League are quite as much community affairs as they are affairs of the church. The membership is so large and important that no other organization can hold a meeting on the night of a League meeting and expect any sort of attendance. If the American Legion or any other organization plans a meeting, the pastor is first consulted to see if the Luther League has a meeting that may conflict. Few young people's societies can show such a record.

### A CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

The Mamrelund Lutheran Church of Stanton has passed through painful periods of readjustment. First the community in its new American home built a church on Swedish standards and ideals. There was family unity linked indissolubly with church unity. Next came an identification of the church life with the American community life. The little town was soon an aggregation of church-going families. When the second generation appeared, the identity between church and community was so complete that to-day the young folks are the life of the church and are stable in their relations to the community. In recent years, three-quarters of the other Iowa counties and more than three-quarters of Iowa villages have lost in population. Few leave Stanton. The church ties and the home ties are strong there. When the younger generation preferred and demanded services in English, it was a natural transition which none the less preserved and carried over all that was

best in the life of their pioneer forefathers. Pastors of the Halland mold came and went. They watched their church and community with the same jealous care. They were aware that a time would come when the Swedish background would mean less to the rising generation with its American birth and education. But the church and community ideals were so identical that the church to-day functions through a rich program as an integral and natural part of its community. When no social event is sure of success and a good attendance unless the church and its activities have that date open, then we have found a place where church and community are one.

# Chapter XII

## THE CHURCH WITH A PURPOSE

## DAYTON, INDIANA

*A church in a small village that coöperates with its neighbor church and utilizes to good effect the natural conservatism of the community.*

When a church announces that it has a purpose, it invites the comment that every church should have one. Yet, whether the statement of purpose is an affirmation for the benefit of the community, or a definition to guide its ambitious congregation, its challenge reminds us of the Church Militant in a world of confused values.

Its validity is tested by the community, the county and the state in which it functions.

The Memorial Presbyterian Church of Dayton, Indiana, took the bold step of emblazoning its purposefulness on a seal and announcing itself to the world as "A Church with a Purpose." With the individual, a motto or seal is more often a symbol of family pride than of ethical or moral importance. But a church, as a public institution, has to live on its present and future usefulness, not upon past achievements. Once a standard or ideal is proclaimed, the world expects a steady, undeviating maintenance of that standard. Dayton's ambitious church placed upon its own community the responsibility of living up to its standard.

The Memorial Church of Dayton did not lightly assume the responsibility. The community had steadily grown prosperous, self-centered, with a material satisfaction that was greater than its spiritual satisfaction. In its history, the church had also known its periods of complacent self-satisfaction, and its periods of active service. Like many

a rural church to-day it had adequately served its community through early crises and had been forgotten as a moral force when these crises no longer presented themselves in the new, prosperous and assured life of the community.

But there came a day when the Memorial Presbyterian Church was no longer content merely to satisfy Dayton's narrow social and religious needs. It announced its purpose:

> To know our Father and glorify Him.
> To know Christ and obey Him.
> To know the Scriptures and practice them.
> To know our community and serve it.
> To know our neighbor and love him as ourself.
> To shun sin and find a Savior.
> To lose self and find eternal life.

Like countless villages in the United States, Dayton offers as much scope for service as may engage the activities of an average church. Moreover, there are not, in Dayton, the material or financial handicaps over which so many rural churches must triumph. At the time the church announced its purpose, Dayton, as a prosperous community, was fully able to live up to the most ambitious program its church could devise. But it was not ready to recognize the church as the center of its life. It was too satisfied with things as they are. It had attained to its material prosperity by hard labor and a progressive spirit; but it had failed to apply the same energy and vision to its church.

### THE COMMUNITY

Just one hundred years ago, the land upon which the village of Dayton now stands, near the eastern border of Tippecanoe County, Indiana, was covered with water. It was a bleak, uninviting prospect that greeted Peter Weaver, the first white settler, when, in the fall of 1822, he chose a site on the southern end of the Wea Plains. A steady influx of settlers into the region helped to drain the land

and found the rich agricultural community which is to-day the pride of Sheffield Township. The first corn was planted by James Paige, in 1823, and the first religious service was held in his cabin the same year. Two years later a subscription school was started in the log cabin of another pioneer, Mrs. Richard Baker. The first brick house was built in 1827, and the first gristmill in 1828—two economic signs of a stable and growing settlement. In 1869 the Lake Erie and Western Railroad passed through Dayton, and its pioneer period was over.

In 1835, a year after its organization, the First Presbyterian Church was built; and around the church grew the present community. The level, fertile lands have laid the foundations for Dayton's present prosperity. Its early settlers were of Scotch-Irish descent, while those who followed were largely of Teutonic stock that brought from Pennsylvania and Ohio sturdy farming traditions. But Dayton has always had a population uniformly American. The village is reckoned as a progressive farming community by the county agent. The recent lack of labor and the fluctuations in markets have convinced the Dayton farmer of the wisdom of practicing a more diversified farming. Wheat was once the chief crop. Oats and hay, live stock, poultry and dairy products are now more generally raised. Corn forms 49 per cent. of the entire crop raised, while swine form 54 per cent. of the live stock.

Dayton has a village population of three hundred and eighty-five, while nine hundred and fifty-two live in the surrounding country. It remains a pretty village of prosperous farmers, with comfortable homes, two churches, good schools, a bank, stores, garages, a grain elevator, a lumberyard and a coal-yard. The steam railroad and the interurban electric line give easy access to Lafayette, a university town, and the state capital, Indianapolis.

The elements of organization and coöperation are still in embryo. No economic necessity, outside the temporary crisis of the war, has made coöperation necessary. Even the two neighboring hamlets are self-contained. A store holds together the small group of thirty-five families at

Moniter, and serves one hundred and eighty-five people around it; while a tie of kinship and economic satisfaction binds together the group of twenty-five families at Pettit, whose store serves one hundred and four people in its vicinity. Coöperation has not yet become an economic necessity. There is no competition to threaten Dayton farmers.

### COÖPERATION BY SOCIAL NECESSITY

None the less the village is coöperative enough when its public health or its community pleasures and advantages are concerned; and it is interesting to find public coöperation centered in the schools. Dayton's first lesson in social and religious coöperation began in its consolidated school, and with the young people who helped the Memorial Church to adopt its emblem of service. The schools are the source of the potential social and religious energy which Dayton Memorial Church enlisted. They furnish a meeting place for church and community. A consolidated school was organized for Sheffield Township. Comfortable automobile trucks, running on schedule time, brought children from a wide area at the public expense. The consolidated school also houses the school library, supported by Sheffield Township and open to the public.

To the high school, a large auditorium, with a stage, was added for concerts and plays. A motion-picture machine, owned by the community, provides public entertainment at low cost. Lectures on agricultural and literary topics are given by professors from Purdue University. One of the professors conducts special vocational courses in the high school, for which credits are given in the regular curriculum. A well-equipped kitchen for domestic science courses makes it possible to serve the public at community gatherings. There is also a large gymnasium which is at the service of the public outside school hours. The last communal improvement includes plans for a community house. Dayton community has learned to utilize its two school plants on a coöperative basis: it became rejuvenated through its school community centers. But the church was kept from becom-

ing a factor in the community life until it announced its purpose and proceeded to function to the starved, unorganized social and religious needs of the younger and rising generation.

### THE CHURCH

In the early days, church and community life were identical, and the steadfast piety of the early Indiana settlers amply survives in the state to-day. Nor is Dayton, with all its material prosperity, without its share of this early religious tradition. But it is rewarding to trace the intimate way in which the church entered into the early community life, the sort of religious leaders that gave it direction and inspiration.

The first religious service in Tippecanoe County was naturally held in the log cabin of James Paige, its first settler, in 1823, the year of his coming. The first minister in the county was a Methodist. It was not until May 30, 1834, that a public meeting was called in Dayton village by members of the First Presbyterian Church of Lafayette, the nearest town, who were resident in the village of Dayton. Accordingly the Dayton Presbyterian Church was founded with a charter membership of forty-nine Daytonians.

The first minister was the Rev. James E. Carnahan, who served until 1875. He was an inspirer and founder of many of Tippecanoe County's institutions. In 1832 he helped to found Wabash College. In 1834 he assisted in starting the church in Dayton to which he gave so richly of his service. In 1837, he founded the first temperance society in Dayton, known as the "Washington Society."

The building of 1834 was succeeded by a better one in 1852; and the foundation for the present structure was laid in 1899. This brick building, the church that made a place for itself in community life, was dedicated in 1900, and marks the new era of Dayton. In the tradition of service bequeathed by the Rev. James Carnahan, whose memorial the church has become, there is a line of worthy pastors.

When, in 1915, the Rev. Haughton K. Fox, Ph.D., was considering three calls from large urban churches, including one to Indianapolis, he made a visit to Dayton. After the service he was asked to take charge of the Memorial Church. While considering this last call he was urged to accept by two young Dayton men, graduates of Purdue University at Lafayette. Like so many of the younger generation in both rural and urban communities to-day, the two had left the college with a desire to find or to create an environment with all the social and religious advantages of the best and most modern community. On returning to Dayton, they saw that with all its material advantages, its up-to-date, expensive equipment, the village and community lacked the essential thing that is called vision. They knew of Dr. Fox's ideals for rural churches and asked him to accept the Dayton call and help them make the church a factor in the life of the younger generation.

Dr. Fox is the son of a Presbyterian minister. After graduation from college and seminary, he gained a valuable experience with young people as the president of Gettings Seminary, at Le Harp, Illinois, spent two years as a teacher and executive of that seminary, and then took charge of the note department of an industrial concern. After four years of business experience he went to Covington, Indiana, his first parish, and spent nine successful years there. While secretary of the Indiana State Federation of Churches during this time, he became convinced that the rural church was neglected. He accepted the Dayton call.

### THE ELDER AND BASKETBALL

Dr. Fox knew the task ahead of him. At the first meeting, however, the problem was adequately put to him by an elder: "The thing that we have got to fight in this town is this game of basketball." This remark was passionately made at the parish meeting of a church in these United States in the year of our Lord, 1915. With this clew, Dr. Fox knew what he was up against. He knew better than ever why the young Purdue men were dissatisfied and

THE BOY SCOUTS OF THE DAYTON CHURCH, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PASTOR, FORM THE FIRE-FIGHTING FORCE FOR THE COMMUNITY

THE CHURCH BULLETIN BOARD

wanted to start life in some place other than their home village of Dayton. He saw that his job was to make Dayton a fit place for its younger generation.

How many rural churches throughout the country are facing the problem of keeping their youth? There is no particular advantage in a Cradle Roll unless the church is able to strike a balance in its favor twenty years later. The interval between the Cradle Roll and the first signs of leadership is full of disasters. Moreover, how many churches and pastors are sighing for extraordinary equipment, for a changed environment, for funds, or what cannot be created by money—a community spirit?

Dr. Fox took Dayton as he found it, at its own self-satisfied value. Like many another rural or urban pastor he faced his leaders and asked at the first session for a large sum of money. And remembering why Youth was spiritually beleaguered in Dayton, he added, "But you're not ready as yet to give it to me."

Hitherto Youth had not been consulted in any of the church activities. In the community life it took a picturesque and entertaining rôle. But it had no active, creative, communal part. Dr. Fox took Youth into his counsel. None was too young. The Boy Scouts found in him an ideal scout master; one who really led them. They were treated as effective members of the community. They now have their own clubhouse, with magazines and games, under their own rules and governance. The farming community, like many others in this country, is handicapped in fire apparatus. After a preliminary difficulty in getting an elder to give his approval, the church bell became the village fire alarm. The Boy Scouts were organized into a fire department and have rendered yeoman service on more than one occasion.

### PUBLICITY

Dr. Fox has a practical sense of publicity. He purchased a printing press, prints the high school paper, which is the only community news sheet; a church bulletin which includes the news of services of other churches, and numerous ad-

vertisements and calendars of the church's program. The printing press is owned by the church, but is located in the high school building; and Dr. Fox conducts a manual training course in printing for which credits are given. Further, with the approval of the School Committee, the minister conducts a course in the Life of Christ for which credits are given the students towards their graduation. This course, as well as the training in printing, brings the minister no remuneration.

With the aid of his printing press, Dr. Fox reaches every corner of his scattered community. The high school paper carries an advertisement of the church activities, but the church does not depend on its press for advertisements. There are three bulletin boards. One stands on the street in front of the church, another is placed in front of a store, across the street from the interurban station, and a third, a new and attractive little board, is to be found in the post-office where some member of every family in Dayton calls at least once a day for mail. The church has a publicity agent to assist the pastor in his advertising. Another institution is that of the Guest Book. All visitors are asked to sign the book; and the printing press never lets them forget the existence of the Memorial Church in Dayton.

### "STARVING IS POOR BUSINESS"

There is an element of humor in any one telling a prosperous farming community that to starve is poor business. But Dr. Fox's printing press made clear his meaning. He does not mince his words.

"Some people go to church like they go to a play—when it's convenient or especially fine.

"They eat and sleep, send children to school, pay taxes *regularly*. But religion is different—they think. Play fair with your spiritual life. *Don't starve the soul; that is poor business.*"

In the church bulletin, the members and community of Dayton are kept abreast of their responsibilities and of their

coöperative duty to the community as well as to their neighbor church. In one issue the members were asked to congratulate the Methodist Church "in that they have met their Centenary quota of $6,000. A fine piece of work."

This attitude of the Presbyterian pastor toward his neighbor church, with which he shares the religious and social life of Dayton, has been cordially reciprocated. It is illustrated by his statement that "the success of our church is, or would be, marred by the failure of the Methodist church, so long as it is here. What they build, we do not also need." This sort of coöperation should take the place of the rivalry that exists between denominations in many a rural community. Since his church has commodious facilities, a larger plant than its neighbor, its socials are attended by Methodists, and are open to the village and community at large. As will be noted, the beginning of a comity agreement is found in the union evangelistic campaign conducted jointly by these two churches. As a practical Christian's view, Dr. Fox's statement is germane to churches throughout the country, and especially to rural churches. The peculiar facilities, social or religious, possessed by one should, in this period of exorbitant prices, complement those possessed by the other. A duplication of facilities and interests leads to a competition that is ruinous in more than the economic sense: it places a spiritual handicap on the entire community.

### LEADERSHIP

In a rural church or community, the question of leadership is far more pressing than in an urban parish. The initiative and energy natural to every church member is given little scope. The burden is placed upon the pastor. The chief reason for this lack of leadership in rural parishes is a matter of distance and weather. An urban parish shares the advantages of rapid transportation, of economic and social concentration that are essentially urban. In the country, unless there is an elaborate system of substitution, a nucleus of material upon which to draw in emergencies,

the pastor is swamped by details that embarrass his parochial efficiency.

The Dayton Memorial Church has a miniature training school for leadership. Leaders in a church should reflect the Christian purpose and example fully as much as their spiritual guide. The pastor should serve in the rôle of a director of these spiritual potentialities in his congregation. The Dayton Church organized its youth. But none, Boy Scout, church elder, or average member, was too young or too old to serve in his or her capacity. Dayton's Blue Square emblem "faithfully sets forth the working ideal of the church, for we believe in a full-orbed, symmetrical type of womanhood and manhood. The example of Jesus suggests this fourfold development; thus the emblem has the authority of being Biblical and practical."

Thus, in the Dayton Memorial Church, every department has one leader or more, and there is a reserve body of teachers with three superintendents in the Sunday school. This leadership extends into community affairs, where Dr. Fox and his leaders take an important part in keeping Dayton an attractive place for the rising generation of homemakers.

In 1919 a five-year program was instituted to give definite aim and concerted action to the work of the church. The parish is divided into six groups; and over each group is an elder and a deacon. The latter has the financial care, the former the spiritual care, of each group. The spiritual, economic and social needs of each group are studied and related in some way to the general strategy of the church, through an individual record system. One family in a group has ability for one thing, another family is gifted in some other degree. The cumulative effect of each group is brought into coöperation with that of the five other groups and these constitute the body politic and ecclesiastical of the church. Nor may the benefits of this organization be especially ascribed to the Presbyterian method of government. No denomination has a copyright on the methods it uses for effectively utilizing every natural ability possessed by its members.

### EVANGELISM

The Dayton church has not smothered its spirituality under the details of social organization. It has a guest book for visiting strangers, but it also recruits as much as it can from the Cradle Roll through the various agencies like the Sunday school and clubs. A week, or ten-day evangelistic meeting is conducted by a visiting pastor. The significant union meeting in which the Methodist church joined is a feature that needs duplication in rural churches. The two churches organized the meeting, invited an able evangelist and individually reaped a spiritual harvest in inspiration and membership. But the steady increase that is the strength and life of any church comes in Dayton through personal effort, the pastor's class and the teachers' work in the Bible school.

### FROM INDIANA TO CHINA

On the church calendar appear the names of two pastors. It is an unusual custom, but one that reflects the corporate activity of the church. These are the Home Pastor and Foreign Pastor. Dayton Memorial Church analyzed the economics of foreign mission work and decided that the missionary was underpaid. Accordingly the salary of its missionary in Shantung, China, was raised to $1,250 and he was given a regular status on the church bulletin as Dayton's Foreign Pastor. Dayton church, for the past three years, has maintained a School of Missions with a course of six weeks duration, lasting until Christmas. There are five grades, with an enrollment of seventy students. In this course the problems of the foreign field are studied and discussed, so that Dayton's reasons for supporting a pastor in China are not sentimental or perfunctory. The church knows the reasons for his existence and the problems he faces and extends its coöperation and influence from the Indiana parish to the parish in China. Three women's missionary organizations, in which the men have honorary membership, raise funds for emergencies. The Westminster

Guild of young women in the parish, the Light Bearers, an organization for girls, and the Bible school of the church all provide a steady recruitment of members, and maintain the interest in Dayton's Chinese parish.

### THE BIBLE SCHOOL

The church, of course, has its Bible school with a venerable record, since it was organized at the same time as the church; and the only session it has ever missed was because of community quarantine. The school uses graded lessons up to and including a senior class. Promotion Day is observed with Rally Day. An annual picnic is held at an early date after the Children's Day program. The annual meeting, when the election of officers is held, coincides with that of the church. Every department in the Bible school presents a written report which goes into the church records. A careful discrimination is shown in the election of officers for the Bible school. A nominating committee presents two names for each office, except for that of superintendent, for which three names are submitted. These come to the session of the church previous to the public meeting; and this body has the right to eliminate any name, or to reject all those submitted and request others. In this way the best talent for leadership is discovered.

The story of Dayton, Indiana, is like that of many another rural community. Whatever material prosperity Dayton possesses over others of the same size, the fundamental problem of church and community, with diverse interests, remains the same. An elder regards basketball as something for the church to fight and the church ends by planning a gymnasium of its own. When it has this its equipment will be complete. The change in point of view is based upon a change of spirit in the church.

### FULL BARNS AND EMPTY CHURCHES

When the Dayton elder found no greater evil to fight in the community than "this game of basketball," he was not

overstating the sort of problem his church should tackle. Constituted as it was, out of touch with community life, and by the elder's ultimatum ready to declare war on the eternal spirit of Youth, the church could find no worthier foe than basketball. But with rejuvenation, a purpose to support a flexible program and manifold activities through which it can enlist Youth, the church is now fighting the good fight with all its might. Of its two hundred and forty-nine resident members, two hundred and eight are enrolled either in the Sunday school or some other organization of the church, and many belong to more than one organization.

Progress in scientific farming brought material prosperity and full barns; progress in spiritual farming has insured a harvest to a church of a type common enough in rural communities, a church that once fitted the familiar figure of "an empty barn."

The purpose of the new spirit is emblazoned on the church seal. That seal is the common property of the Dayton community. Boy Scout and elder know its significance, own it as a personal emblem. Aligned with Youth, ready to serve the community, with a parish in Dayton and another in Shantung, Dayton's Memorial Church is firmly rooted in its purpose to glorify God and serve him through service to its neighbors and its community.

# Chapter XIII

## THE VILLAGE CHURCH

## HONEY CREEK, WISCONSIN

*A story that proves it possible for a church with a peculiar custom or doctrine, such as those of the immersionists or of the liturgical type, to minister to an entire community.*

Many years ago, as the carefully preserved church diary shows, the good Baptist folk of Honey Creek, Wisconsin, were sorely offended by the conduct of a certain "Sister Miranda Gates." Not only was it credibly reported that Miss Miranda had committed the heinous sin of dancing, but when called upon to explain the matter to her fellow church members, she had brazenly admitted the offense and had the hardihood to add that she "thought there was no harm in it." The account of the affair in the old diary ends impressively: "The hand of fellowship was withdrawn from Sister Gates."

It is a far cry from the church which sternly withdrew the hand of fellowship from an erring sister to the same Baptist church to-day which has an open membership and stretches forth the hand of fellowship freely and gladly to every man, woman and child in the community. This church, with its immersionist tradition, which began by serving only those of its own faith—and them, as the unrepentant Miranda discovered, none too gently—has risen to its responsibility as the only church in the community and gradually broadened its scope until it offers service to all irrespective of faith.

A little hamlet, with but four hundred population, and half of that living in the country, surrounded on all sides

by places larger than itself, Honey Creek has yet maintained its own individuality. Partly perhaps owing to the natural beauty of the place, local pride developed early and has always been strong, and this is largely responsible for the well-defined community spirit that has long existed, fostered by the church and in turn reacting upon that organization in still further broadening out its activities. The village has a neat, well-cared-for appearance. There are cement walks, electric lights, well-kept lawns. The electric light company, organized by the citizens themselves in 1913, maintains seventeen street lights on a moonlight schedule, the expense being defrayed by an annual basket social held in the community hall. The latter building, with the church and schoolhouse, form a triangular group of substantial red brick buildings, and, though divided by the road, all form part of a single plant. A civic league of twenty-five women, whose purpose is to beautify the village, has turned its attention to the school grounds. Finding that the soil is too poor to permit the growth of ornamental shrubs, they have proposed to the School Board that it bear the expense of fertilizing and grading the school grounds, while the civic league will take care of their planting and upkeep. Eventually it is planned to treat the grounds of the church and community hall in the same way, and in the enterprise the league has enlisted the coöperation of the Agricultural Department of the State University.

### THE PIONEER CHURCH

The present church building was erected only in 1920, to take the place of a building put up in 1905, which was destroyed by fire; but the church itself goes back to the first half of the last century, to pioneer days when the first public services of worship for the small white settlement were held in the little log schoolhouse. On February 6, 1841, as the old diary records, a handful of people met under an oak tree at a farmhouse and organized the Free Baptist Church, but it was eight years before the congregation was able to put up a regular building, and still another year before a par-

sonage could be provided. A small hall was added to the church plant early in its history, its principal purpose being to accommodate the quarterly meetings of the church, and that original hall, growing shabbier and more dilapidated every year, had to serve the ever-developing community interests of the church until its contrast with the fine new church building of 1905 was considered too marked to be tolerated. An unsuccessful effort was made to organize a stock company to erect a hall for the use of the community, but in the end the church undertook the project, raising the money quickly and, if not without sacrifice, at any rate without noise or fuss.

Thus the church did for the community what, in this instance, the community had failed to do for itself, and when the new hall was completed, in 1911, its community purpose was emphasized by calling it not the church hall, but "The People's Hall." The name chosen only gave formal expression to a principle that had been growing more and more dominant in the life of the church for some years—the principle that it was the function of the one church in the community to serve *all* of the community. Perhaps the first definite record of such a principle is found in the single article of incorporation of the Ladies' Aid, in July, 1899, which stipulated that *any* lady in the community was eligible to membership. The ghost of Miranda Gates, one may suspect, permitted itself a quiet smile when that article of incorporation was adopted! After the building of "The People's Hall," other organizations connected with the church quickly fell into step. The Sunday school opened its doors wide to all who cared to enter, and in 1915 the men's "Brotherhood" extended "the hand of fellowship" to every man in the place by developing itself into a strong community club. The final step in the long path the church has traveled since it expelled Sister Miranda Gates was taken in December, 1922, when open membership was decided upon.

### REBUILDING TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

In 1920, as has been mentioned, the church building, which had been the pride of its congregation when it was completed fifteen years earlier, was burned to the ground. With it went also "The People's Hall," symbol of the community spirit of this Baptist congregation. The building went, but the symbol survived. The first motion to rebuild church and hall was made, while the fire was still burning, by a citizen who was not himself a member of the church. When the time came for clearing the ground and laying the foundations, other citizens donated the labor of themselves and their teams, and within two years after the fire both buildings had been replaced with not a dollar of indebtedness, the community having raised $15,000 and $10,000 being received from outside sources.

The present equipment is entirely adequate to all needs of the community. The new church building has on the first floor a comfortable heated vestibule and well-finished auditorium, off which opens a Bible class room with removable partitions. In the basement are separate Sunday school rooms and a furnace room with modern heating apparatus. In the assembly room of the community hall general meetings and various entertainments are held. A curtained stage and dressing room are provided for plays. Here, too, is given a regular moving-picture show every Friday night the year round, a small charge for admittance covering the cost, while the same room is also equipped as a gymnasium. In the basement of this building is a well-furnished kitchen with a large dining-room opening off it. The total value of the church property, including the parsonage and land, is about $44,000.

The finances of the church are handled in a businesslike manner by the finance committee. Early in January the amounts needed for the coming year are carefully estimated, and the resulting budget is presented in a circular letter sent to all Protestant families in the community. The every-member canvass follows. The appeal receives a considerable response from the community at large, as is shown by

the fact that half of the one hundred and fifty pledges received in 1922-23 were made by non-church members, and 40 per cent. of the total amount raised came from them. In the past year, leaving out of account all building fund moneys, 43 per cent. of the total expenditures, which amounted to $3,731.63, went for benevolences. There is no church debt.

The population of Honey Creek remains practically stationary year in and year out, which in itself would preclude a large yearly growth in membership. In 1909 there were ninety-two members, and at the end of 1922 there were one hundred and twelve, twenty-two of whom were non-resident and five inactive. It seems reasonable to suppose, however, that the policy of open membership, recently adopted, will be reflected in an increase in membership. Of the sixty-four families represented, twenty-one live less than one mile from the church and twenty-three live more than five miles away. About one-fifth of the total membership is composed of young people under twenty-one, while men and boys make up 45 per cent. of the total.

Probably the greatest single impetus the Honey Creek church ever received came when, as already described, the Sunday school fell in line with the general program of community service as exemplified in the naming of "The People's Hall." It was in 1914 that a Workers' Council was organized in the Sunday school to find out how it could be improved. The chief fault discovered by this body was that the Sunday school was ministering not to the community as a whole, but to a single small group, the church group, within the community. The first step taken by the Workers' Council was the organization of a Cradle Roll and a Home Department, both of which have now grown to a membership of thirty-five. The organization of an adult Bible class was the second and most important step. A meeting to discuss the matter was called at the home of a family which had held aloof from both church and Sunday school, and the secretary of the newly formed Bible class was also appointed from a family which had been outside the church. The Sunday following the organization of the

A VIEW OF HONEY CREEK VILLAGE

—AND SOME OF THE INHABITANTS—MEMBERS OF THE LADIES' AID

new class the Sunday school room was filled with people, a large proportion of whom had been in the past attendants of neither church nor Sunday school.

### A COMMUNITY-MINDED SUNDAY SCHOOL

As a result of these efforts, the year after the Workers' Council started their investigation the Honey Creek Sunday school came up to the denominational standard set for Baptist Sunday schools. Further than that, the spectacular improvement served to bring upon the Honey Creek church a modest amount of public attention. People began to express curiosity about this little Baptist church in a small village that was doing things for the community in a community-minded way, and the church members held their heads higher in consequence and were inspired to still further efforts.

The Sunday school is fortunate in having as a superintendent a woman who comes continually into contact with new methods of religious education through giving part of her time to Baptist Sunday school work throughout the state. The standards by which the Honey Creek school is guided are thus summarized by the superintendent:

1. Look out continually for new ideas and adapt them when possible.
2. Always have a goal ahead. The satisfied school never improves.
3. Watch for weak points and concentrate on improving them.
4. Foster the spirit of loyalty to the school.
5. Remember that the constituency of the Sunday school is the entire community.
6. Strive always for coöperation among ourselves and thoughtfulness for others.

Various methods are used to stimulate interest in the Sunday school. The opening event of the year is Rally Day and the survey made by the Sunday school teachers in connection with it. Changes always take place during the sum-

mer, and this survey helps to reëstablish the work in the fall. Plans are laid and schedules prepared for a "visit every family" campaign at the August meeting of the Workers' Council, which meets once a month throughout the year. The forthcoming survey is announced at church, and on the appointed day ten teams of two persons each visit the Protestant homes in the community. Every family is invited to church and especially to Sunday school. Children's Week was held for the first time in 1922. The community was divided into districts by a committee and the districts divided up among the Sunday school teachers. Seventy-one calls were made by the teachers in their respective districts during the first three days of the week. On Friday evening came the Parents' Meeting, starting off with a "pot luck supper" and finishing with a moving-picture. On the following day the children's party was held to which all the children in the community were invited.

Regularity of attendance at Sunday school is stimulated by the Cross and Crown system of cards and by prizes. To every child who attends on fifty of the fifty-two Sundays of the year, a Bible is given the first year and in succeeding years some other book. These prizes were won by twenty children in January, 1922. "Perfect Attendance Diplomas" are awarded for perfect attendance at this or some other Sunday school. The present enrollment of the school is one hundred and twenty, of whom ninety-six individuals live on farms. The average attendance is ninety, or 75 per cent. of the total enrollment. Of the twelve classes, eight are organized, and all but two study graded lessons.

### WORK IS PROVIDED FOR ALL

An opportunity for social life and usefulness is given to many in the nine other organizations which function in connection with the church. Six are young people's organizations, and these account for more than half of the total of two hundred members.

The Y. M. C. A., with fifteen members, a branch of the County Y. M. C. A., meets once a week with the pastor,

taking up the regular study course, and afterwards playing basketball and volley-ball. The boys spend two weeks of every summer at the State Y. M. C. A. Camp, and during the late spring and summer they play baseball on Saturdays in a league formed by seven Y. M. C. A. groups from communities in the vicinity. Girls belong to a Junior Ladies' Aid (ten members), and to the Girls' Glee Club (twelve members) which meets once a week in the community hall to sing and to play basketball. The Christian Endeavor, which has thirty-five members, holds the usual Sunday night meetings, has socials and helps with Italian mission work in Kenosha and Racine. The twenty members of the enthusiastic dramatic club, organized in 1921, have already given two pageants and are working on another. The Young People's Choir practices every week and leads the singing at the Sunday evening meetings.

That the two women's organizations, the Missionary Society, with twelve members, and the Ladies' Aid, with twenty-six, are doing things is shown by their combined expenditures for the last church year, which amounted to $1,376.38. The Ladies' Aid pays for parsonage repairs, helped pay off the mortgage on the church building that burned, paid for having the church basement finished and for the sidewalks on the church property, and bought the stove, dishes and silver for the community hall. It has raised $6,500 for the church in the twenty-four years since it was organized. The "big fire" which destroyed the church and hall failed to daunt these indomitable ladies, who at once pledged $3,000 towards the new church and hall, paying $1,000 on their pledge in 1921. They conduct an annual bazaar, serve meals on appropriate occasions, make rugs and aprons and serve a dinner every two weeks in connection with their regular meeting to which all the community is invited. This dinner has become a community get-together. Since the war they have also managed an annual Lyceum course of five lectures and entertainments during the winter. One feels sure that poor Miranda Gates would have enjoyed and benefited by the fellowship of this admirably energetic organization!

### ALL ACTIVITIES CAREFULLY PLANNED

The Honey Creek Brotherhood, as already noted, opened its membership to all men in the community in 1915. The banquet with which that occasion was celebrated has since become an annual affair, attended by men from miles around. The membership of this Brotherhood is now fifty. The members work consistently for the church and played a prominent part in its restoration after the fire, but their activities are not confined to religious matters. At the regular monthly meetings, which start with a luncheon, addresses are given on subjects of interest to farmers, and every year the Brotherhood puts on a Farmers' Institute of two days at the community hall, the meals being prepared as usual by the Ladies' Aid. It was the Brotherhood that bought the moving-picture machine in order that the young people need not go to neighboring towns for their movies. The Brotherhood and the Ladies' Aid together have a Picnic Association that turns the neighborhood loose once a year for an old-fashioned community get-together out in the woods. Anywhere from five hundred to one thousand people come to that picnic. There are a band, a good speaker, a ball game and a big dinner which is the share of the Ladies' Aid in the day. The Brotherhood manages the Memorial Day program and finances the free dinner for soldiers and their friends. It supports the Chautauqua, and manages the Honey Creek "Combination Sale." The latter was started about fifteen years ago and has been held every year since. Live stock, foodstuffs, and left-overs are brought to the corner by the village store from the surrounding countryside, and the day is devoted to auctioning them. At noon the women have dinner ready in the hall.

All activities of the church for the year are outlined by the Local Board of Promotion, which consists of the deacons, trustees, clerk, the two treasurers and the presidents of all organizations. Every year this group adopts a standard which includes every phase of church life. This is the latest standard presented:

I. *Church Life*
- (a) Evangelism
  - 25 additions by baptism each year
  - A class in church membership
- (b) Personal service
  - 125 average attendance Sunday school
  - 125 average attendance A.M. church
  - 100 average attendance P.M. church
  - Every member an active member of some auxiliary
    - Enlist every woman in women's organization
    - Enlist every young person in C.E.
    - Enlist every man in Bible class or Brotherhood

II. *Giving*
- (a) Stewardship campaign
- (b) Every member contributing to current expense and benevolence
- (c) Annual every-member canvass
- (d) Ten per cent. yearly increase in giving

III. *Prayer Life*
- (a) Fifty average attendance Prayer Meeting
- (b) Family prayers in every home
- (c) Prayer lists and prayer groups
- (d) Every member in prayer service at least once a month

IV. *Education*
- (a) Work for at least one decision for definite Christian service each year
- (b) A Christian periodical in every Christian home
- (c) Table for distribution of literature in community house
- (d) A committee to agitate the temperance cause
- (e) A committee to promote missions
- (f) Survey each year

V. *Social*

A committee to promote, encourage and supervise social life in the community.

"Keeping people reminded that the church is here," is the church slogan. Honey Creek has no newspaper of its own, but church notes and write-ups appear in the Honey Creek local news in the papers of six neighboring towns. Occasionally the pastor sends out mimeographed cards, and these have been the means of bringing several families into the church. This form of publicity has proved so successful that the church hopes some time to be able to send weekly announcements to every family in the community.

Honey Creek church has always thought well of the men who have served it and has loyally supported them. The pastors, as a result, have been able to accomplish much and have had a large share in making the church what it is to-day. But in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who have brought this to pass. The community stands solidly behind the church because years ago the church which had once withdrawn the hand of fellowship from poor Miranda Gates began to broaden out its program to include the whole community, and in the process became so broadened itself that it has been able to enlist the loyalties of a united community and has opened its doors to all faiths.

# Chapter XIV

## TWO CENTURIES OF SUCCESS

## MIDDLE OCTORARO, PA.

*The story of a church in the open country which for two centuries has successfully adapted itself to changing circumstances and is to-day, if possible, more effective than ever before.*

There is no one formula for church success. There is not even one generally accepted idea of what constitutes success. The church is so sensitive a social institution, reflects so faithfully the characteristics and the problems of its community, that it can conform to no hard and fast rule. In its success—or failure—it is a law unto itself. There are common, universal elements, however, that are worth searching for. The church sets itself to win individuals to an allegiance to its Master. But it is its business, also, to build its gospel into the life of its community; as the years pass, progressively to transform its community into the likeness of His Kingdom. That is a many-sided, complicated business, as many-sided and as complicated as life itself. In its accomplishment, the organization is unimportant, save as any piece of machinery is important in relation to its product; the purpose, the spirit, the transformation wrought are all-important.

The Middle Octoraro Presbyterian Church is obviously successful. To see that is easier than to state its formula. It had Scotch-Irish beginnings, and that must have helped a good deal—What was the Scotchman's prayer? "God grant I may be right, for ye ken I never change!" It has a long and worthy history, and that ought to mean more than it sometimes means. It serves a community of solid

and enduring prosperity based on the wealth of fertile soil, and that is a good foundation on which to build. Perhaps its formula for success could be stated something like this: "A sound gospel, earnestly proclaimed; a firm hold on noble traditions, never to be despised if you do not let them overwhelm you; a program of work large enough to challenge effort, definite enough to measure progress, broad enough to comprehend the essential interests of the community and the Kingdom; a good working organization with many willing, loyal workers; behind the whole enterprise a sincere, persuasive, consecrated personality." That is to say, it has a motive, a history, a purpose, a plan, a leader and a will to succeed; and, since it has, faith also cannot be denied it.

### EARLY DAYS

Middle Octoraro is situated in an open-country neighborhood in the southern part of that richest of all agricultural counties, Lancaster, on the main road between Quarryville and Christiana, about four miles from the one and five miles from the other. The story begins something more than two hundred years ago, when settlers first came to take up the rich lands of this part of Pennsylvania. To the north, beyond a ridge known as Mine Ridge, lie the rich limestone lands of northern Lancaster County, to which came early Dutch and German settlers. To the east and south, along the Brandywine River and Big and Little Elk Creeks, settled the Friends. Between them, and westward toward and beyond the Susquehanna River, settled another class of immigrants, of whom the following is written by a local chronicler:

By birth they were mostly Scotch or Scotch-Irish, with a sprinkling of other nationalities. In religion they were Scotch Covenanters, Calvinists, Huguenots, Presbyterians, men who kept the Sabbath with the utmost rigidity, men who believed in the inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, an educated and paid ministry, a representative form of government, and in education as the handmaid of religion. And

because of the similarity of their beliefs, they became adherents of the Presbyterian Church, afterwards to become known as the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Such was the character of the men and women who first established a church organization at Middle Octoraro, or "Middle Octorari," as it was written in earlier times.

For some time the people who settled along the west branch of Octoraro Creek worshiped with those of like faith at the Upper Octoraro Presbyterian Church, near Parkesburg, Pennsylvania. In 1727, however, the Presbytery of Newcastle, to which they then belonged, organized them as a separate church; and they joined that fellowship of great Presbyterian country churches which has continued to the present as one of the strongest and most significant groups of country churches to be found anywhere in America.

### PASTORATES AND MEMBERSHIP

During the period from 1781 to 1914 the church had but six different pastors. Between those dates, for various short periods aggregating all told about five years, it was without a settled pastor. The six pastorates, therefore, actually covered a term of one hundred and twenty-eight years, an average of a little more than twenty-one years. The length of four of these was particularly notable, covering forty, twenty-one, twenty, and thirty-seven years, respectively, an average of virtually thirty years. The present minister, the Rev. George Hopkins Shea, began his pastorate with the end of 1914.

Fairly complete records of membership are available from 1825. At that time the total membership was reported as two hundred and thirty-two. So far as the official records of the Presbytery go, the highest point in the membership was reached in 1836, when the total was five hundred and thirty-one. The lowest point was in 1876-77, when it was one hundred and thirty-seven. The average membership for the ninety-seven years for which figures are available has been two hundred and forty-three.

During twenty of these ninety-seven years, the church had no additions to its membership on confession of faith. Eleven of the twenty were consecutive years, from 1870 to 1880 inclusive. The two strongest open country neighbors of the Middle Octoraro Church, namely, Chestnut Level and Little Britain Presbyterian churches, likewise reported no accessions on confession of faith for these same consecutive eleven years. The high points, evangelistically, of its history have been 1832 to 1834, 1866, 1886 and 1916, when there were added to its membership on confessions, respectively, two hundred, ninety-two, forty-one and eighty-two. The record shows only one year, 1832, when more than ten members were received by letter from other churches. This church has grown by its own evangelistic efforts. In the whole period of ninety-seven years it received a total of 1,193 new members by confession and 244 by letter, or an aggregate total of 1,437. Its average annual gain by confession was 5 per cent. of its membership. The average annual gain by both confession and letter was 6 per cent. Such an average maintained over a term of a century attests the enduring strength of the organization. At the beginning of the present pastorate the church entered on a new period of increased activity and vigor. In seven years it achieved an increase in the total membership of 209 per cent., and in the Sunday school enrollment of 204 per cent. The increase in per capita gifts for benevolences over the previous average was about three and one-half times, and the increase in per capita gifts for local expenditures was about 50 per cent.

### ENVIRONMENT

Middle Octoraro church is an example of an open-country church without the advantage of a natural community. In the reach of its interest and its influence it is by no means confined and could not, without violation of all its traditions, be confined to its immediate neighborhood in Bart Township. It has always been much more than a neighborhood institution. But its location requires it to set its

influence against the pull of two village trade-centers and four neighborhood trading points, and, to a lesser degree, of several others within whose areas of influence its parish lies. There is an assumption, the truth of which is in many sections amply attested, that the future lies with the church at the trade-center, rather than with its open-country neighbor which has the initial support of no natural social grouping and must create both its own center and circumference. But here the assumption is not sustained.

The accompanying maps picture a situation of considerable significance. The parish of the church has a general radius of about five miles, though it has some active members living at a greater distance. Quarryville, a village of eight hundred and twenty-three inhabitants, and Christiana, with nine hundred and eighty-five, are the larger centers which divide this parish area between them, the church being about on the line of their trade communities. Parts of four townships are included in the parish, but only one is entirely covered. Five small hamlets have each a certain local importance, their neighborhoods together covering most of the parish aside from the immediate environs of Quarryville and Christiana. The largest of these, and also the one nearest to the church building, Bart or Georgetown (both names are used locally), has perhaps one hundred and fifty inhabitants. Here are a store and post-office, hotel, restaurant, bakery, blacksmith shop, feed mill, creamery, a hall and a Methodist Episcopal Church. The Middle Octoraro church lies within its neighborhood bounds. The other four are all quite small. Nickel Mines has a store and post-office, a now unworked nickel mine and a small Protestant Episcopal church. Nine Points has a store, post-office, blacksmith shop and creamery. Bartville has a store and post-office. Smyrna has now only a blacksmith shop, its store having burned.

### A CHURCH IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

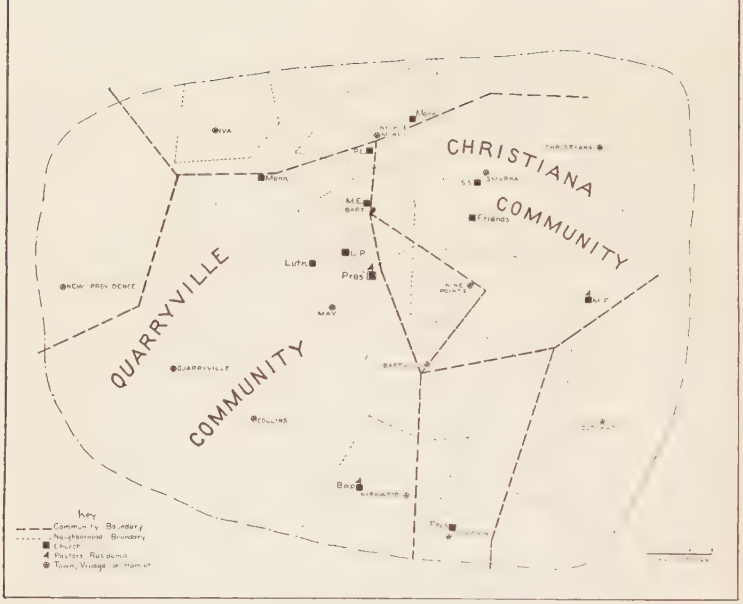
Where the Middle Octoraro church stands is no semblance of a village or hamlet. An open stretch of road wind-

ing through a pleasant valley; a fine old stone church and a chapel set in a grove of beautiful trees with the manse, farm buildings on the church farm and cemeteries hard by; a stone's throw down the road the church, manse and cemetery of its now inactive neighbor, the Upper Octoraro United Presbyterian Church, said to be the oldest church of this denomination in America; other farm homes showing in the distance—such is the center of this parish. As is true of more than one of these deep-rooted old country churches, hamlets and villages do not set bounds to its influence. It draws members from them all as well as from the surrounding farms; and members moving from farm to village are not detached from the country church but still attend and support it.

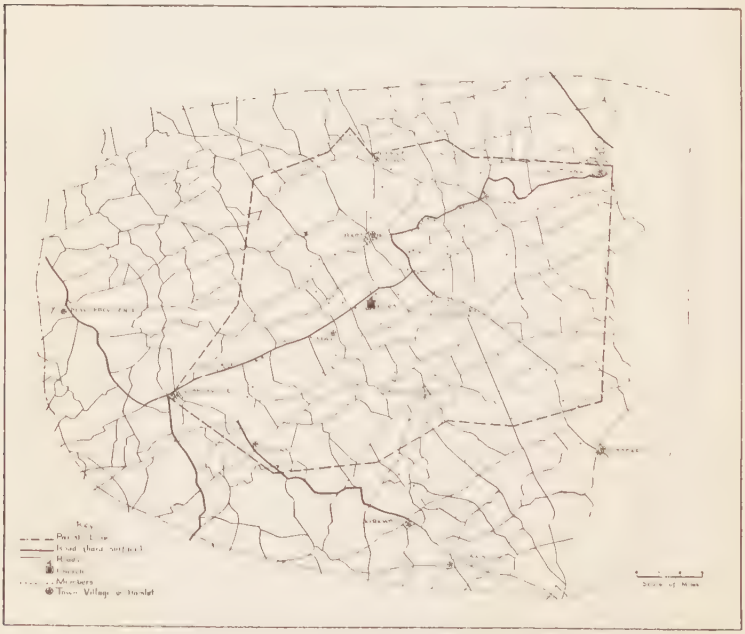
Here, then, in the conflict of which many a country neighborhood is the scene, country life is recentering its interests as the range of communication—the cruising radius—of the farm is steadily lengthened. Against the pull of the larger centers no near-by country church or neighborhood can long maintain itself unweakened unless it digs deep the foundations for an enduring loyalty. In this instance the church had, through a long period, a slowly diminishing vitality. Not so long ago the community was badly disrupted. The people could not be got together on any proposition. Neighborhood pulled against neighborhood and the two larger centers pulled against them all. Different religious and social groups ran lines of cleavage throughout the community. Between this church and its nearest neighbors there was not only little coöperation but even some signs of active antagonism. These are tendencies which have undermined more than one country church to the point of utter futility. Now, a very good community spirit is developing, which has been greatly helped by a Grange, recently organized on the initiative of the Presbyterian pastor. The broader program of the church has extended and solidified interest. A growing sense of unity is pervading the entire area of the parish.

THE SUMMER CAMP IS ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF MIDDLE OCTORARO CHURCH

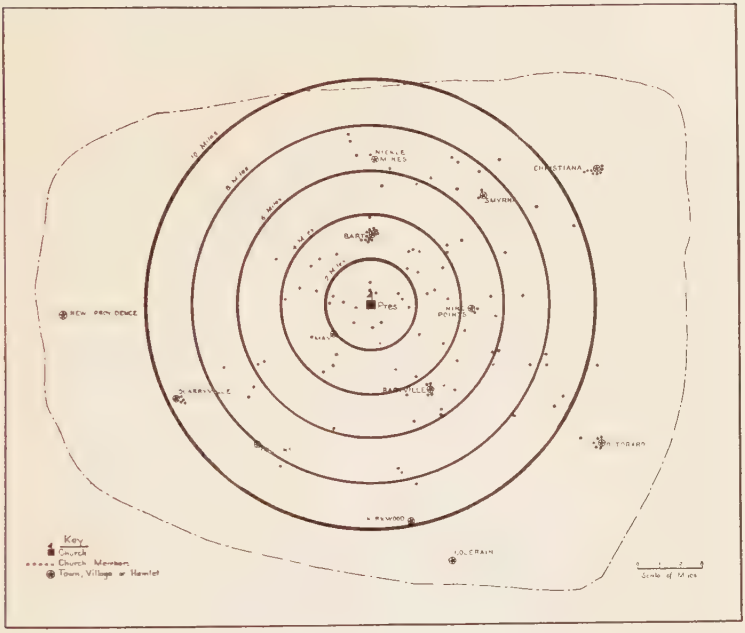
THE TWO HUNDRED YEAR OLD CHURCH OF MIDDLE OCTORARO




TRADE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD FROM WHICH THE CHURCH DRAWS, MIDDLE OCTORARO




THE CHURCH PARISH, MIDDLE OCTORARO


Key
Church
Church Members
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Pres
CHRISTIANA
SMYRNA
BARRATTS
NEW CASTLE
MIDDLETOWN
ODESSA
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BLACKBIRD
ODESSA
BLACKBIRD

### FARMING AND ROADS

Lancaster County agriculture is too well known to need description here. This particular section is by no means the richest part of the county, but it has good land and is, on the whole, well farmed. It is a general farming and dairy country. Wheat, corn, tobacco, potatoes and hay are its chief products, and in about that order of importance. The quality of the farming is improving; and in this the county agent has an important part. There are no local coöperative enterprises; but the Grange last year did about $10,000 worth of coöperative buying. Some local farmers are members of county agricultural associations, as the Tobacco Growers, the Potato Growers, and the Hampshire Hog Breeders' Associations.

There is a growing interest in good roads, for which there is need. There are about three hundred miles of public road within the parish, but only ten and one-half miles are hard-surfaced and five miles otherwise improved. During the winter the roads are a serious problem in church work. Both Quarryville and Christiana provide an easy outlet to near-by cities by rail and trolley. Five rural mail delivery routes from Quarryville and two from Christiana, besides four local post-offices, provide ample mail service.

### FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Social and fraternal organizations there are in ample number. In the near-by villages are seven lodges; and the immediate neighborhood of the church has two sewing circles, a Parent-Teacher Association and the Grange, besides the various subsidiary organizations of the church. Certain of these have had a marked influence for good upon the progress of the community. Excellent leadership is available for all lines of interest.

The Middle Octoraro church shares religious responsibility for this community with no fewer than sixteen other church organizations. Quarryville and Christiana have each three churches which draw to a certain extent upon the

area of this parish. The parish boundaries include ten country or hamlet churches. Five of these are near enough to be in some definite sense competitive, though one of them has recently suspended active work. Nine of the ten churches own church buildings and two have manses. There is, however, no other resident minister near at hand, and the Presbyterian pastor is in a real sense pastor for the whole area: for example, he conducts many funerals for members of other churches. The total membership of these country churches is about five hundred and fifty; and of the six village churches, one thousand and thirty.

On every side, the parish of this church reaches to that of some other Presbyterian church. The parishes of three country and four village Presbyterian churches touch it. Indeed the Middle Octoraro church has many members whose residence suggests that they might more conveniently belong to some other Presbyterian church.

### THE FIRST BUILDING

The first church edifice was evidently built in 1730 or thereabouts. That it was a primitive structure we may well believe; yet it served its purpose excellently for more than half a century and housed a growing and influential congregation. It seems to have been in some sense a community building, erected by the combined efforts of the religious people of the surrounding neighborhood. Evidence of this is found in the knowledge that for some years the Covenanters used it for worship on alternate Sabbaths. In 1783 the congregation purchased a farm from the sons of William Penn, paying for it fifteen pounds, eleven shillings and six pence—about seventy-five cents an acre, a fair price for those days. Mention is made in the deed of a meeting-house and a schoolhouse, erected or about to be erected, and of the establishment of a graveyard. In accordance with the practice of the time, certain improvements had evidently been made on the property before the patent deed was applied for. The oldest marked grave in the cemetery bears the date of 1732.

### A CENTURY OF IMPROVEMENTS

The present building was erected some time during the pastorate of the Rev. Nathaniel W. Sample, which lasted from 1781 to 1821. In 1849 the structure was somewhat rearranged in its interior appointments; in 1913-14 extensive improvements were made, including the addition of a bell tower and a vestibule. The manse was erected about 1850. In 1882 a farmhouse was built and in 1907 a new cemetery was established across the road at the north of the church. Extensive improvements were made on the property at the beginning of the present pastorate in 1915; these included the installation of a water system for the manse and farmhouse, complete remodeling and redecorating of the manse, repairs on the farmhouse and barn and the property generally, and a new roof and new interior decorations for the chapel.

### PRESENT EQUIPMENT

That the present equipment is not now entirely adequate to the greatly broadened program of the church, though serving well its earlier purposes, illustrates how strikingly our conception of what a church should do for its community has altered. This equipment consists of a stone church in excellent condition, containing a large auditorium and a vestibule, and set in a grove an acre in extent; a small chapel near the church; two cemeteries, including six acres of ground; an excellent manse with one acre of ground; and a farm of seventy acres with a farmhouse, barn, and the other usual farm buildings. The main auditorium can seat comfortably two hundred and seventy-five; but on special occasions at least four hundred can be crowded into it. It is heated with a pipeless furnace and lighted by oil lamps. The interior appointments are simple and attractive. There are an organ and a piano. The chapel has two rooms, a kitchen, and a main room which is used for social purposes and by the younger classes in the Sunday school. This, too, is provided with an organ and a piano. The chapel is also

much used for various sorts of community meetings. The total value of the property is about $30,000. Thus two centuries have seen a substantial and solid advance in property and equipment, but, even so, the physical assets have not kept pace with Middle Octoraro's changing thought as to the function of the church.

### FINANCES

The finances of the church are well organized and conducted in a businesslike manner. The budget system is in use for both current expenses and benevolences. An annual every-member canvass is made on the basis of this budget, twenty teams of two men each taking part under the direction of the trustees. Duplex weekly envelopes are used by most of the congregation. Only the members of the church are solicited; but almost all of the families represented in the congregation (including a good proportion of the non-resident members) contribute regularly. The church is free from debt, the last obligation which results from the remodeling of the property having been cleared off seven years ago.

The total income of the church during its last fiscal year was about $4,400, and its expenditures were about $200 less. A little more than one-third of the expenditures were for benevolent purposes. In addition, the various subsidiary organizations raised about $760, approximately two-thirds of this going for benevolences. Thus out of a total expenditure of about $5,000, 42 per cent. was for missionary causes. Here are to be seen the fruits of that program of missionary education which is one of the most important recent developments in the church's work and to which reference will be made in a later paragraph.

It must be admitted that the rate of per capita giving has not been as high as in many churches less able financially to give. That is not, however, a peculiar characteristic of this particular congregation but a feature of many churches of similar type and history. It is conservatism and caution rather than lack of generosity. For example, such churches

have been slow to put the salaries of their ministers on a plane commensurate with the rising living costs and the dignity and importance of their position. The modern rural minister, required to keep an automobile and use it constantly in the service of his church, and to keep abreast in his study and reading with all the movements of his time, without doubt needs a salary which many a country church cannot bring itself to consider either necessary or possible. It is only within a few years that this church has paid a salary exceeding one thousand dollars. It has raised the minister's salary three times during the present pastorate and brought it up to the announced minimum of its Synod and denomination. If the status of the church (the extent of its parish, the breadth of its program, the size of its membership) be considered and compared with other of the churches studied, many of them less favorably situated, that minimum is, by a considerable margin, too low.

### BENEVOLENCE

For one hundred years, until just recently, there was no great change in the rate of benevolent giving. Prior to 1920 when, with the initiation of the Presbyterian New Era Movement, this church registered its initial considerable gain in benevolence contributions, its annual missionary offerings usually ranged from $100 to $200. The lowest annual amount reported in the minutes of the General Assembly was ten dollars in 1828; but the total reported in 1833, $380, was not exceeded until 1918. A year-by-year record shows considerable variation, but a variation around a more or less constant norm. Very great increase has been made, however, in the last three years, the total for which approximately equals the total for the preceding fifteen years. The increase in the total budget of the church for all purposes, including local support, has been slower and not so great. Before 1914 a total contribution of ten dollars per capita was exceeded only once, in 1883. Usually the per capita total contributions ranged between four and seven dollars a year. The total amount raised last year was the highest in

the history of the church, although the per capita giving at present is certainly not greater than it was, on the average, fifty years ago, if one compares the relative purchasing power of the dollar then and now.

### A CHANGING POPULATION

Perhaps this section of Pennsylvania has experienced less rapid and fundamental change in the composition of its population than have most rural communities throughout the country. There are about as many people on its farms as at any time in the last century and a half and a large proportion of them were born in this or adjacent communities. Yet not more than a dozen families in the present membership of the Middle Octoraro church represent the original stock that founded it. Such a statement may not seem of particular significance to a church which has watched its community change almost completely several times in a generation, as many have. Still less would it seem of significance to a church which remembers that where it now stands no one was living a generation ago. But some old churches have declined from great strength almost to the point of abandonment, because their communities have slowly changed, the original stock being replaced by a stock not native to their religious and social tradition. These slow changes are often more deadly than rapid ones. Sometimes such a church, lacking the mood to adjust itself to new conditions, seems to wrap the mantle of its self-content about it and lie down in peace to die, because the newcomers who surround it are "not of its sort." But this Middle Octoraro church has overcome the subtle temptation that inheres in the dignity of its tradition. That it is stronger now than it has been for nearly a century is a fact of the greatest significance; and the lesson of it is a lesson that many an old church needs to learn.

### ANALYSIS OF MEMBERSHIP

A total membership of three hundred and forty-nine places the Middle Octoraro church in a very select fellow-

ship of open country churches. There are larger organizations, of course; indeed, two of its nearest Presbyterian neighbors have greater memberships. But the whole number of open country churches with more than three hundred members is small. The average membership of all the country churches in one hundred and seventy-nine counties, for which figures are available (2,920 churches), is only eighty-two. Of this present membership of three hundred and forty, sixty are non-resident. There are a number of non-resident members who should transfer their letters to other churches, and who are being urged to do so. There are besides some who are only temporarily non-resident. Of the two hundred and eighty-nine resident members, thirteen are incapacitated by illness or other cause from any church activity; and sixteen are non-active, that is, they do not either support the church or attend its services. This makes a net resident active membership of two hundred and sixty. The total membership includes representatives of one hundred and eighty-seven families, averaging 1.8 members per family.

A church which has had a normal, healthy growth and which has a well-balanced program ought not to be limited in its appeal by considerations of age, sex or class. Certainly it ought not to fail conspicuously in reaching any particular element in its community. The membership of this church is a very fair cross-section of its community, 45 per cent. of the total being men and boys. One-sixth are under twenty-one years of age; slightly more than one-half are between twenty-one and forty-five; a little less than one-third are over forty-five. In the upper ages the women considerably predominate; but in the intermediate age group the men are in the majority. The number under twenty-one exceeds by a wide margin the number enrolled in the local high school and has a much higher proportion of boys. Here, then, is a well-distributed membership in which there is promise of strength for the future.

Of the two hundred and eighty-nine resident members, nineteen live in Christiana and Quarryville, thirty-six in other near-by villages and hamlets and two hundred and

thirty-four, or more than four-fifths, live on farms. Those making up this latter group are distributed over considerable territory. Thirty-six of them live within a mile of the church; sixty-nine within three miles; one hundred and two from three to five miles distant; and twenty-seven more than five miles away. The majority of those who live in the villages or hamlets are four and one-half miles or more from the church. This wide distribution has a distinct effect upon church attendance, especially in winter or when the roads are in poor condition.

The wage-earners in the congregation represent a variety of occupations, but nearly three-fifths of them, including in their families more than three-fourths of the resident membership, are farmers. Farm-owners, renters and laborers are enrolled, apparently with almost equal facility. Indeed, the proportion of tenants among the operating farmers on the church roll is larger than the proportion of tenants among the operating farmers of the community.

### HOW THE MEMBERS CAME

During the eight years of Mr. Shea's pastorate virtually two-thirds of the total present membership was brought into the church. Of the others, fifty-two joined within the last twenty years, thirty-three within thirty years and twenty-one within forty years, while seventeen have been members for over forty years. Of the whole number 91 per cent. united with this church on confession of faith, other churches contributing by letter only thirty-one members. Churches of other denominations, however, have contributed to the membership in other ways than the dismissal of members by letter. One-fifth of those making up the membership were previously connected, as members, adherents or by family training, with churches representing twelve other denominations.

Stability to a high degree is indicated in the fact that more than two-thirds of all the members were born in this community. Only thirteen members were born outside of Lancaster County and only three of these came from states

other than Pennsylvania. Nearly two-thirds of the families are in at least their second generation in this community. Only one in seven has lived here less than ten years. Here is a great initial advantage, though its significance must be read in the light of the comments previously made. The Scotch-Irish stock no longer predominates, a considerable proportion now having German ancestry. The church represents now a real amalgamation of the various elements out of which its community has been made.

### PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

In spite of distances, the regular activities of the church have a remarkable hold upon the loyalty of its members. Three in five regularly attend its services of worship, nearly half regularly attend the Sunday school, and seven in ten regularly attend its various special exercises. The number who habitually do not attend any of these services is almost negligible. Of the active members 45 per cent. have assumed some definite responsibility in connection with the church program. These are the officers, teachers, choir members, ushers, committee chairmen and the regular participants in the various public exercises. A considerable number of others are members of the different organizations in the church. This may be regarded as a rather unusual record. These active workers represent all ages; but relatively to their numbers those under twenty-one furnish the largest quota. Of the total membership, including the non-resident and the non-active, all but fifty-four participate in the support of the church, and all but seventy in the support of its benevolences.

### ATTENDANCE

The average aggregate attendance per week throughout the year, for all the services of the church, is five hundred and nineteen, or almost exactly double the resident, active membership. The variations in the attendance as between the different seasons of the year are interesting, for seasonal

climatic conditions affect the country far more than the city church. Thus, attendance at worship is highest in the last quarter of the year when the average is almost three times what it is in the first quarter. In the two middle quarters of the year attendance at worship is double what it is the first three months. Similarly, religious education attendance during the three severe winter months is less than 40 per cent. of the average for the rest of the year. Interest in missions is at its peak in the fall, when the school of missions described later is under way. Social and recreational activities are highest in the spring quarter, but maintain a very even average through the year, with the exception of the first three months. The aggregate attendance of all services and functions of this church during the year exceeds twenty-seven thousand, more than one-third of this total coming in the last three months.

Expressed statistically, 44 per cent. of all the time given by these people to their church is devoted to services of worship. Twenty-one per cent. is given to mission services, 14 per cent. to religious education, and 21 per cent. to social, recreational and musical occasions. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this distribution is the proportionately large share of interest that goes to missions. This, as will be noted subsequently, receives an important place in the whole program of the church. There are, of course, interchangeable values in all these forms of activity. The missionary activities, certainly, are educational, and they also have their recreational features. Religious education includes both worship and missionary instruction. And very real religious values run through the whole. The weakest point that this analysis discloses is the religious education. This is confirmed by other data, to which reference will be made. It is in this connection that the program most needs to be strengthened.

### MEETINGS

Regular Sabbath services of worship are held morning and evening throughout the year. Attendance at the

morning service averages one hundred and seventy-five, except during the first three months of the year, when it hardly exceeds seventy-five. Attendance at the evening services ranges anywhere from one hundred to four hundred, but averages not far from one hundred and fifty. The two services reach somewhat different sorts of audiences. In the morning at least 70 per cent. of the attendants are adults, divided about equally between men and women, and almost all of them are church members. In the evening at least 75 per cent. are young people, the young men being in the majority, and usually not less than one-fourth being non-members.

The young people's service is held in the evening, is conducted by the young people themselves, and followed by the preaching service. The evening service is a community affair and draws from a radius of many miles, the young people having learned the apostolic practice of going forth to service two by two. On the first Sunday in each month, the young people's Home Mission Society takes charge of the evening service and provides a popular home mission program which usually includes something in the form of pageantry or tableau. The regularity of attendance at services is affected primarily during the winter months by the state of the roads and the weather. Until 1921 it was customary to discontinue the evening services during the winter; but they were continued in the winter of 1922-23 by way of experiment, with good success, and it is planned to maintain the custom.

The only regular union service with another church is the Union Thanksgiving Service with the Methodist Episcopal church of Georgetown; and to it no great amount of interest attaches. The Young People's Society, however, occasionally exchanges visits with other young people's societies in the vicinity, including some of other denominations.

From October to April, cottage prayer meetings are held, one or two a week, the average attendance being from thirty to thirty-five. A protracted meeting is held virtually every fall, usually for eight days, but on the last occasion for two weeks. During the present pastorate there has been,

with one exception, such a protracted meeting every fall. The meeting in 1921 resulted in twenty-eight conversions and the same number of additions to the church. Of the twenty-eight, eighteen were adults and ten were Sunday school children. A professional evangelist has not been employed since 1915. Generally the results of the evangelistic services have been excellent. In 1921 there was a very evident deepening of the spiritual life of the church. The services in 1922 were not so effective.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday school has an enrollment of two hundred and sixty-seven, and an average attendance of one hundred and ten, except during the three months of winter, when it drops to about fifty. Nearly all the members of the Sunday school live on farms and the factor of distance and the condition of the roads are very important. During the three months of winter, when the attendance is at low ebb, fewer classes are held and a less thorough-going system of grading is used. The classes include: Adult Men's Class, Adult Women's Class, Teacher-Training Class, Young Women's Class, Young Men's Class, three classes for "teen"-age girls, two for "teen"-age boys, one Junior Boys', one Junior Girls', one Primary Class of boys, one Primary Girls', and one Beginners'. The five younger classes use the chapel. Four classes, for adult men, young men, and "teen"-age boys are taught by men. The two young people's classes, and the adult women's class are organized. The Boys' and Girls' classes were organized, but the organization has not been kept up. Virtually all of the classes use graded lessons. The Sunday school is organized into two groups with a superintendent for each group, according to its place of meeting. There are a Cradle Roll and a Home Department, each with an enrollment of thirty. The Teacher-Training Class is a part of the Sunday school, meeting at the regular hour.

Little's Cross and Crown system has been used to increase

the attendance. Special equipment for work includes picture studies, maps and small chairs for the younger classes. Sunday school papers are not given. The school library consists of one hundred volumes. There is an annual Sunday school picnic which is the only regular recreational affair of the school as a whole. Various classes, however, have socials. The young people's classes entertain one another. Mission study is a part of the Sunday school program once a month. Missionary offerings are taken on special occasions and sent to the Home and Foreign Mission Boards. The minister is an alternate teacher of the Young Men's Class. The regular communion Sabbaths are observed as Decision Days with excellent results. Twelve young people in this church are now attending college or some other school beyond high school grade. The church has not contributed any one to the ministry or other form of employed Christian work in the last ten years. The Sunday school was represented during the last year by twelve delegates to the County Sunday School Convention and eight to the state convention. The school met the expenses of two of the delegates to the state convention. The Sunday school is supported out of its own regular offerings, the total cost last year being about $125.

The church has never held a Daily Vacation Bible School or a week-day religious school. Plans are being made, however, for a Daily Vacation Bible School to be held next summer, probably on a group plan.

### OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

There are four other organizations in the church, two of which are distinctively missionary in purpose. The Woman's Missionary Society for Home and Foreign Missions, with a membership of seventy, has an all-day meeting once a month. The Young Woman's Guild, for girls between twelve and twenty, has a membership of thirty-one. It has one afternoon meeting each month. Under the leadership of the Woman's Boards of Missions, such local groups as these

have achieved a place of great importance in the missionary life and work of the church. Not with anything even remotely approaching the same thoroughness have the men of the churches been organized for the study and support of missions. These two organizations have taken the lead locally in pressing the great missionary causes upon the attention of this church. Its very real and apparent interest is a tribute to their energy and skill.

The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor has a membership of forty. Its regular weekly meetings have an attendance running up to one hundred and averaging sixty. They also conduct well attended monthly socials. Until recently, the pastor has acted as leader for a fine troop of Boy Scouts. This work has been temporarily discontinued, but will be resumed as soon as possible.

The church has the life eldership plan and its Session now includes five elders. The Board of Trustees has nine members, elected on a rotary membership plan for three-year terms. All but one of these fourteen officers are farmers.

### THE GENERAL PROGRAM

At each annual congregational meeting, the pastor outlines a general program of church activities for the year to be considered and approved by the congregation. This has been effective in securing the interest of the members. A somewhat more formal process, however, now seems to be desirable. Plans are therefore under way more definitely to crystallize the working organization of the church through the formation of a pastor's cabinet which will include representatives of the various organizations and interests in the church. It will be the function of this cabinet to coördinate the various lines of work and coöperate with the pastor in the general direction of all activities. The multiplicity of the interests which have developed makes some such arrangement a practical necessity.

This church believes in making religion both articulate and active. Not without reason does it style itself "The Church of Community Interest." Its annual program is varied to

touch every interest and appeal to every element. If the stated activities were set down in calendar form the result would be something like the following:

*All Year Activities*

Preaching service, every Sunday, morning and evening.
Christian Endeavor, every Sunday evening.
Sunday school, every Sunday morning.
Popular home mission service conducted by the young people, first Sunday evening in each month.
Monthly socials under the auspices of the Christian Endeavor Society, varying in type according to the season. These are held outdoors in summer and in the chapel in winter. The average attendance exceeds fifty. They include a swimming social in August, a corn roast in September, a strawberry festival in June, a "bacon bat" in the fall, etc.
Woman's Missionary Society, meeting once a month.
Young Woman's Guild, meeting once a month.
Session, meeting once a month.
Board of Trustees, meeting quarterly.
Communion service, celebrated twice a year.
Choir, meeting weekly for practice.

*Seasonal Activities*

Annual Easter cantata regularly given on Easter Sunday night.
Annual lawn fête conducted by Young Woman's Guild with an average attendance of two hundred in June.
Annual strawberry shortcake festival in June, attendance from two hundred and fifty to five hundred.
Annual Children's Day service, June.
Annual congregational business meeting, June. Average attendance, seventy-five.
Annual social of Young Men's and Young Women's Bible classes in July; each class acts as host in alternate years; average attendance, fifty.
Annual social for whole church conducted by Young Ladies' Bible Class in July or August.
Annual Sunday school picnic, August, attendance, two hundred.

Annual musical service or recital, September, given by and for the choir, average attendance, two hundred.

Cottage prayer meetings held for seven months beginning in October, one or two weeks, various homes being opened for this purpose, average attendance, thirty-five.

Annual evangelistic services eight days to two weeks, October or November.

Annual bazaar given by Young Ladies' Bible Class on the Friday afternoon after Thanksgiving, average attendance, one hundred and fifty.

Union Thanksgiving service with the Methodist Episcopal Church of Georgetown, average attendance, forty.

Annual School of Missions; though this was held a year ago for the first time, it will be made a regular feature of the program. The plan followed is to have group meetings in homes. There were seven groups last year, at various natural centers in the community. Each group met one night a week for six successive weeks in the late fall. There were two teachers for each school except one, which was taught by the pastor; the teachers were drawn from the neighborhood where the group met. The average attendance was twenty-two a week for each group or a total average of one hundred and fifty-four a week. These group schools followed the methods usual in such enterprises, studying the interdenominational mission texts of the year. The group feature was an interesting variation which illustrates the significance of much of the effort of this church to create a parish in an area which has no common gathering point except the church and which is so definitely divided in its trade and social interests. It is interesting also that one of the groups met in the village of Christiana, where there is another Presbyterian church. The demand for this came from the members resident in the village. The pastor of the village church not feeling able to undertake it, the pastor of the country church promoted it successfully.

Annual Christmas service either Sunday or week night. Last year a cantata was given; there was a tree with the usual appurtenances thereto.

Two midweek social and missionary meetings conducted each year by the Woman's Missionary Society for the benefit of missions, average attendance, sixty-five.

Annual Sunday evening missionary service conducted by the Young Woman's Guild.

The young women of the church frequently present pageants and tableaux to illustrate various aspects of mission work. A year ago a pageant, "The Trial of Civilization," an original product of one of the members, illustrating the triumph of Christianity among non-Christian people, was presented twice with an aggregate attendance of nearly five hundred.

*Other Activities and Interests*

Outside speakers are frequently heard during the year on missionary and similar topics. For example, the subject of Near East Relief was presented at a morning service in April.

A representative of the Anti-Saloon League spoke at a morning service in May.

The superintendent of the Department of Jewish Evangelization of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions spoke at both morning and evening services on a Sunday in June.

A Field Representative of the Department of Jewish Evangelization spoke at a morning service in November and with a young woman associate presented a series of eight tableaux at the evening service assisted by the young people of the congregation.

A missionary from the southern mountains spoke at an evening service in November.

The pastor also frequently uses stereopticon lectures provided by the Boards of Home and Foreign Missions in his evening services.

Various organizations of the church from time to time coöperate with other churches. For example, the choir sang at a service in Holtwood and later during an evangelistic service in the Gap Presbyterian Church. The pageant "The Trial of Civilization" was given in Quarryville. The Christian Endeavor Society visited the Christian Endeavor Society of the Christiana church and entertained it in return. Such visits are exchanged usually with other churches two or three

times a year. The Evangelical church at Eden presented a play, "Home Ties," under the auspices of this church, in the hall at Georgetown.

A number of years ago there was a lack of library facilities within this community. Lancaster County has no public library system, and it was possible to obtain books only from the Lancaster City Library. In consequence the pastor arranged for the installation of five branch libraries within this parish. Each branch has from fifty to seventy-five volumes, changed usually once a year. Each branch is used quite freely in its neighborhood.

Last fall, under the auspices of the Boy Scouts, a radio set was installed in the manse for a number of weeks as a demonstration. This aroused interest throughout the community.

These are all activities which are carried on directly by the church or its subsidiary organizations. The missionary and community interests of the church are apparent in all that it does. They have never undertaken the support of a mission "Special," unless we so regard the support, with a small sum of money each year, of a mission Sunday school in Kentucky. Most of the benevolence money contributed goes to the general work of the various boards of the church. Whatever need appears for local relief within the community is systematically taken care of by the Missionary Society. This calls for perhaps $100 a year in money; but the members visit the sick, sew for the poor and help in emergencies of all kinds.

In the regular church services, the effort is consistently made to apply the gospel teachings to the apparent needs both of the community and of the whole world. Missions are after all only the practical application of the gospel. And missions have a local significance which is no whit less important than their national or world-wide significance. So the minister, in his preaching and his public prayers as well as in his plans, emphasizes what the abundant life of the gospel may really mean in the community. He has preached special sermons on the relation of the church to

such problems as health, social life and economic welfare.

In addition to these various more or less official lines of activity, the church has unofficially exerted its influence in other lines, through the minister and members, acting as individuals to bring about needed improvements. Among the achievements so recorded the following are the most important:

This community had never had a Chautauqua until two years ago. There was some interest in it, but this interest was not organized and could not overcome the opposition of those who felt that the difficulties were too serious. The American Engineers in France had a motto—"It can't be done—here it is." That is also the motto of this minister and his helpers. A successful Community Chautauqua has been held at Quarryville for two summers.

We have already noted that until recently the community was badly broken up and without any sense of social or religious unity. One of the forces which have helped to unite it has been the Grange. This was organized in 1920 largely as a result of Mr. Shea's initiative. It now has a membership of one hundred and is accomplishing an important work.

No organization in Lancaster County is doing more for general farm progress than the Farm Bureau. Last summer Mr. Shea coöperated with the county agent in a county-wide drive for new members. He devoted three weeks to addressing meetings, organizing township groups and reaching individual farmers. In this drive he had charge of the southern half of the county.

Members of the church and the minister were also chiefly instrumental in the organization of a Parent-Teacher Association. It has now been active for two years, meeting monthly either in the chapel of the church or in the schoolhouse.

Usually a community singing school is conducted in the fall of the year in the chapel. The most successful of these was three years ago when a school of sixty was enrolled, meeting one night a week for thirteen weeks. A paid leader was brought out from Lancaster. The work consisted in elemental voice training and the principles and practice of general part singing.

Mr. Shea has charge of the annual temperance meeting of the W. C. T. U., arranging the program and securing the speakers.

### PUBLICITY

With so many things to make known, the Middle Octoraro church naturally believes in publicity, which is principally of four sorts. Announcements both of the regular services and of all special events are inserted in the papers of Quarryville, Christiana and Lancaster. The papers make no charge for this service. For special events display advertisements are also frequently used. The cost of these is met by the particular organizations giving the affair. In addition the church has regular correspondents for the Quarryville and Lancaster papers whose duty it is to provide write-ups of the various church happenings for insertion as news. The fourth method of publicity is through bulletin boards, of which there are four, located at Bartville, Georgetown, Nickel Mines and Nine Points. Display posters and typewritten announcements of all events are posted on them.

Readers of this volume are familiar with the Par Standard for Rural Churches which has been used as the measuring stick in all the recent surveys. The Middle Octoraro church is able to meet every one of the thirty-one points on that standard though one of them only in part.

### LEADERSHIP

In a very real sense the whole program pivots on the manse. This is not to intimate that the minister alone deserves credit. He has built upon worthy traditions and has had many excellent and loyal helpers. As has been stated, nearly half the members take some definite responsibility and the number wholly indifferent is also negligible. But it is a characteristic of good leadership to know how to utilize traditions and how to develop other leaders and workers.

This has been the first and only pastorate of the present minister, Rev. George H. Shea. He came to it direct from

the seminary. He is a Pennsylvanian himself, with the same background as his people. The mistress of the manse (and who knows how much of the minister's success is due to his wife?) was born in this community. These two have done a work deserving of the highest praise. They have needed vision supported by faith, energy tempered with patience. This is a conservative church and community. No one would be quicker to admit that fact than those who have grown up in it. And a church can hardly have the strength of conservatism without its weakness also. Changes are not to be effected in a day. For such a field the present pastor is, both by training and temperament, excellently well fitted. Of a quiet and forceful personality, he commands the respect, affection and loyalty of his people. He is vitally interested in the rural ministry, viewing the country church as a life work, not as a stepping stone. Through summer schools and special reading he has familiarized himself with the problems and the possibilities of country life and of the country church. His enthusiasm and the practical definiteness of his plans have attracted many young people to the church, while he has held to a marked degree the interest and support of the older people. His hand is in all this work which has been described, and it is a worthy monument.

Country churches like Octoraro are among the chief of America's treasures. There are all too few of them. Yet any one who reads this record of what the Middle Octoraro church has achieved through the generations cannot but realize that what has been accomplished here might be accomplished equally well by other churches meeting similar conditions. There is no hidden secret in the long and honorable record of this church. Rather the sources of its success are an open book for all to read.

The Octoraro church has attracted to it a succession of able and devoted pastors who have dedicated long periods of their lives to its service, who have not only been residents of the village but have lived there long enough to influence its youth from the cradle to maturity. The church has been broad and dynamic enough in its teaching and its program

to draw to its membership people from the open country as well as from the village, and people of all ages and all economic groups.

Not a little of its continued influence has been due to the enlisting of so many of its members in managing one or another of its diversified activities. The leadership and driving power for community betterment of every kind has been supplied by the church. It has conceived the Gospel of the Kingdom as including every side of life. It has practiced a seven-day religion, reënforcing its membership by continuous cultivation rather than by spasmodic pressure. Finally, its financial policies have been systematic and sound, with the result that the burden has been widely distributed and that the quota for benevolences is nearly as large as that for maintenance.

The church that serves is the church that grows. A church that embarks upon a broad-gauge program will not itself lose thereby, but rather, as it persistently keeps its evangelistic and spiritual note sounding in the ears of its people, will grow and prosper through its ministry while digging deep the foundations for the Kingdom in the life of its community. That is the secret of the continued success of the two hundred-year-old church of Middle Octoraro.

THE END

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